

# Triangle: The Fire That Changed America

## A Devastating Event in American Labor History



On March 25, 1911, a fire broke out in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City. The fire quickly spread through the factory, trapping hundreds of workers inside. In just 18 minutes, 146 people, mostly young women, died.

**Triangle: The Fire That Changed America** by Dave Von Drehle

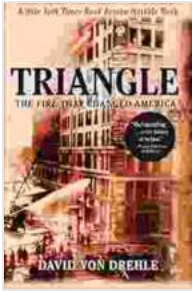
★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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The Triangle Fire was one of the deadliest industrial disasters in American history. It led to widespread public outrage and demands for improved safety regulations in factories. The fire also played a major role in the rise of the labor movement in the United States.

## **The Factory**

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory was located in the Asch Building, a 10-story building in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan. The factory employed over 500 workers, mostly young women who earned between \$6 and \$12 a week. The factory was known for its poor working conditions. The exits were often blocked, the fire escapes were inadequate, and there were no sprinklers.

## **The Fire**

The fire started on the eighth floor of the Asch Building at around 4:45 PM. The cause of the fire is unknown, but it is believed to have started in a pile of fabric scraps. The fire quickly spread through the factory, engulfing the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors.

The workers who were trapped on the upper floors had no way to escape. The exits were blocked by flames and smoke, and the fire escapes were too narrow and flimsy to accommodate the large number of people trying to use them. As a result, many of the workers jumped from the windows to their deaths.

## **The Aftermath**

The Triangle Fire was a devastating event for the city of New York and the nation as a whole. The fire led to widespread public outrage and demands for improved safety regulations in factories. The fire also played a major role in the rise of the labor movement in the United States.

In the wake of the fire, the New York State Legislature passed a number of laws to improve safety conditions in factories. These laws included requirements for fire escapes, sprinklers, and fire drills. The fire also led to the creation of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission, which investigated the causes of the fire and made recommendations for improving safety conditions in factories.

The Triangle Fire was a turning point in American labor history. The fire led to the passage of important safety laws and helped to raise awareness of the plight of workers in the United States. The fire also inspired the rise of the labor movement, which fought for better wages, hours, and working conditions for workers.

## **The Legacy**

The Triangle Fire is still remembered today as one of the deadliest industrial disasters in American history. The fire led to important changes in safety regulations and helped to raise awareness of the plight of workers in

the United States. The fire also inspired the rise of the labor movement, which continues to fight for better wages, hours, and working conditions for workers today.

There are a number of memorials to the Triangle Fire, including a plaque at the site of the fire and a statue in Washington Square Park. The fire is also commemorated in a number of books, articles, and documentaries.

The Triangle Fire is a reminder of the importance of safety in the workplace. The fire also reminds us of the importance of fighting for the rights of workers. The fire is a reminder that we must never forget the victims of the Triangle Fire and the lessons that we can learn from their deaths.



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