

Haymarket Chronology



June 2010 for the Regina Polk Conference

General strike for 8-hour work day

In the winter and spring of 1886, the enthusiasm for the 8-hour work day had infected the skilled and unskilled laborers in Chicago. The national strike was to begin on May 1. The strike was held on the anniversary of when the nation's first 8-hour work day law became effective upon then Illinois Governor Richard J. Oglesby's signature on May 2nd, 1867. But the governor did not have the strength to stand up to business, so the law was never enforced.

Chronology

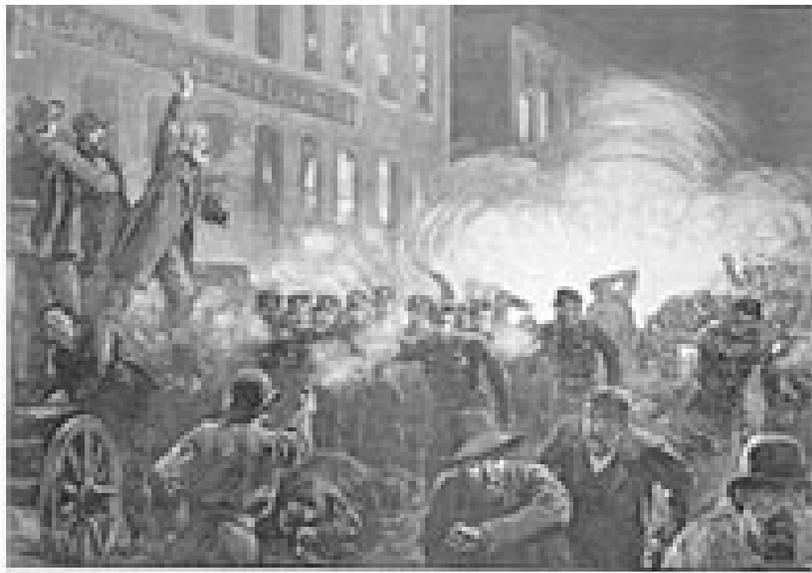
May 1, 1886 -- Coordinated strikes and demonstrations are held nationwide, to demand an eight-hour workday for industrial workers.

May 3, 1886 -- McCormick Reaper Works factory strike; unarmed strikers, police clash; several strikers are killed. (plant on right)

August Spies, a leader of the anarchists was so disgusted with the shooting of the strikers that he called a mass meeting for the next day.

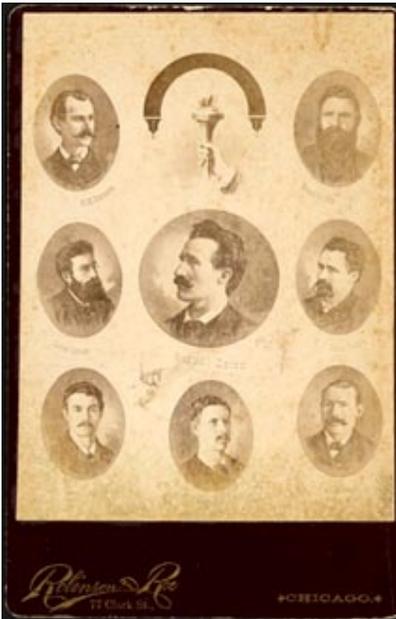


Evening of May 4, 1886 -- A meeting of workingmen is held near Haymarket Square; police arrive to disperse the peaceful assembly; a bomb is thrown into the ranks of the police; the police open fire; workingmen evidently return fire; police and an unknown number of workingmen killed; the bomb thrower is unidentified.



May 5- 6, 1886 -- Widespread public outrage and shock in Chicago and nationwide; police arrest anarchist and labor activists, including seven of the eight eventual defendants (Albert Parsons fled the city only to surrender himself on June 21. [on right]).

May 27 -- The grand jury indicts 31 charged with being accessories to the murder of policeman Mathias J. Degan; eight are chosen to stand trial: Albert Parsons, August Spies, Oscar Neebe, Louis Lingg, George Engel, Adolph Fischer, Michael Schwab, Samuel Fielden.



June 21, 1886 - July 15, 1886 -- Jury selection commences; 981 citizens are questioned during the voir dire process; the resultant panel of twelve are largely businessmen, clerks or salesmen; the jurors, like the public at large, hold preconceived notions about the defendants' connection to the bombing.

July 16, 1886 - August 11, 1886 -- Trial testimony begins; 227 testify including 54 members of the Chicago Police Department and the defendants Fielden, Schwab, Spies and Parsons; the defendants are prosecuted not as perpetrators but as responsible for instigating the violence; a guilty verdict and death sentence are considered inevitable.

July 16, 1886 - August 11, 1886 -- Trial testimony begins; 227 testify including 54 members of the Chicago Police Department and the defendants Fielden, Schwab, Spies and Parsons; the defendants are prosecuted not as perpetrators but as responsible for instigating the violence; a guilty verdict and death sentence are considered inevitable.

August 19, 1886 -- The jury convicts the defendants and sentences Neebe to fifteen years in the penitentiary and the others to death by hanging.

October 7, 8, 9, 1886 -- The convicted deliver speeches to the court before sentencing.

October 9, 1886 -- Judge Gary delivers his speech and the final decision.

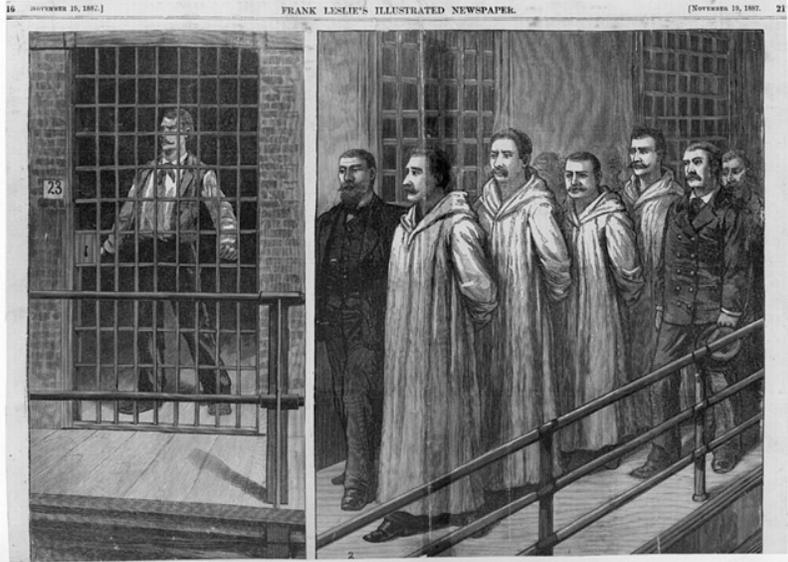
March 1887 -- Legal counsel for the convicted appeal the case to the Illinois Supreme Court.

September 14, 1887 -- Illinois Supreme Court upholds rulings and verdict.

November 2, 1887 -- The U.S. Supreme Court denies an appeal, despite an international campaign for clemency.

November 10, 1887 -- Louis Lingg commits suicide in his jail cell.

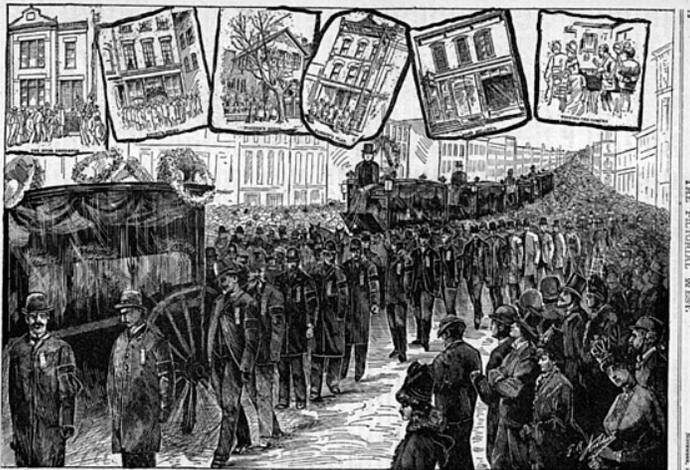
November 11, 1887 -- Parsons, Spies, Engel and Fischer are executed.



November 12, 1887 -- Fielden and Schwab are transported to Joliet Prison where they join Oscar Neebe.

November 13, 1887 -- In Chicago, the funeral procession of Lingg, Parsons, Spies, Engel, and Fischer in Chicago is witnessed by 150,000 - 500,000 people.

June 26, 1893 - Illinois governor John Peter Altgeld (right) pardons Neebe, Fielden, and Schwab.



THE MARCH TO THE GRAVE.
THE FUNERAL PROCESSION OF THE CHICAGO ANARCHISTS—PARRYING DOWN MARSHALL AVENUE.—(See page 16.)

Chronology and images are from the Chicago Historical Society and are available at <http://www.chicagohs.org/hadc/chronology.html>



For an in-depth analysis of the history of the Haymarket Affair, please visit [The Dramas of Haymarket](#), an affiliated, interpretive web site developed by Northwestern University in cooperation with the Chicago Historical Society.

Police Statue

The bronze police statue was dedicated on Memorial Day 1889 to honor the fallen police officers. It was later moved to Unions Park and back to the Haymarket square in 1957 to promote tourism. On October 6, 1969, “the monument was blown apart by several sticks of dynamite.” Police at the time considered it the act of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), but it was instead the handiwork of the Weathermen. The statue was repaired and rededicated May 4, 1970, only to be blown up again on October 6, 1970, repaired and returned to its pedestal within a few months. Under 24-hour police guard, the statue remained there about 2 years until it was moved to police headquarters at 11th and State, later moved to an atrium at the police academy, and now stands in the back of the new police headquarters in the 3510 S. Michigan Avenue.

Based on *Death in the Haymarket* by James Green (New York: Anchor, 2006)

