

FULTON BAG AND COTTON MILLS

The Strike of 1914

Despite the early prosperity of the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills, the company was troubled by periods of labor unrest. A wage dispute resulted in a two-day strike in November 1885. A second brief strike occurred in August 1897, when white workers protested the hiring of black women. The 1897 strike was settled after five days.

A lengthier strike took place in 1914-1915, triggered by management's disapproval of the growing efforts among the workers to join the United Textile Workers. Besides the issue of unionization, the strikers demanded an increase in wages, a 54-hour work week, and a decrease in the use of child labor. The strike gained national notoriety when it drew the attention of the newly formed U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations, who sent representatives to Atlanta to gather testimonies in March 1915. The strike ultimately failed in May of that year.

The Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills Collection

The manuscript portion of the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills records consists mainly of correspondence, testimonies, and operative reports from the period of the 1914-1915 strike. These remarkable documents tell the story of labor relations in the South from both the workers' and management's perspective. In addition to manuscript and personnel records, the collection also includes photographs of millworkers and site exteriors and interiors, ledgers, artifacts, and a rich and varied collection of architectural drawings.

Georgia Tech's Acquisition of the Collection

In 1985, when the former mill site was being sold, an official of the company offered to donate the collection to Georgia Tech. Assisted by Robert McMath and the history department at Georgia Tech, the collection was brought to the Georgia Tech Archives, where it now forms the backbone of the Archives' collection of materials on textiles and the textile industry in the South.