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# THE MISSOURI AND NORTH ARKANSAS RAILROAD STRIKE

BY

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MY FATHER AND MOTHER  
SAMUEL S., AND MARINA M. GOODEN

## PREFACE

THE strike on the Missouri and North Arkansas Railroad from February, 1921, to December, 1923, involving the complete suspension for nine months of a railroad serving an otherwise isolated people, the wholesale uprising of an exasperated citizenry, and the driving of the strikers out of the country, was a unique episode in the history of labor in the United States and merits the more than passing interest of students of the labor problem. In presenting the essential facts in this monograph the author has sought to give such information about the road and the people involved as is necessary to a full understanding of the unusual developments connected with the strike.

There has been no attempt to justify or to defend the attitude, policy, or actions of either side. Quotations have been used freely so that the reader may be brought in direct contact with the spirit of the situation, appreciate the viewpoint of the participants, and understand their reasons for acting as they did.

It was not easy to secure the necessary information. The position of the writer as a resident of the state and as Professor of Economics in one of its leading colleges, together with his personal acquaintance with some of the participants inspired confidence in his statement that he had no axe to grind for either side and opened sources of information that might have been closed to a stranger or an outsider. In no instance has any one supplying information or material even suggested that it be used in any particular way or for a particular purpose. It has been clearly under-

stood that the cooperation of members of both parties was being sought and that the writer was to be entirely free in his judgment as to the use of the material. Only a few have failed to cooperate, and practically all of the information that they could have given has been secured from other sources.

Citizens of Arkansas have an interest in many details and documents that may not be of particular concern to others, and this fact is regarded as justification for the extensive quotations. Doubtless there are some interesting features that have not been revealed, but it appears that the main facts are clear and that the account is reasonably complete.

The results of two years of intermittent study are incorporated herein. Information has been collected from every conceivable source from New York to California. The *Records of the Legislative Committee*, collections of correspondence, large files of statements and affidavits, voluminous newspaper files and clippings, public documents, extensive personal correspondence, and personal interviews with scores of people have all contributed their bit. Claims and charges have been traced down and checked with care. The writer spent a month in north Arkansas and southern Missouri, during which time he traveled a thousand miles by automobile, seeking information at first hand and meeting both citizens and strikers face to face.

The large number of people who have contributed valuable information, together with the confidential nature of much of the information itself, makes it impossible to acknowledge publicly the indebtedness of the author to particular individuals. Without their willing aid this monograph could not have been written. To my wife, Settie Knapp Gooden, has fallen the task of copying numberless pages of material of all kinds. Professors Ray M. Lawless and R. L. Campbell, of Hendrix College, have read the manuscript and

to them is due much credit for corrections in punctuation and sentence structure. Professor Henry R. Seager, of Columbia University, has rendered invaluable service in the way of suggestions and criticisms.

The author confesses to a conviction that organized labor has been a mighty force in securing and safeguarding the rights of the toiler. Unionism must continue in whatever form will most effectually serve the interests of the worker and of society at large. The weaknesses and shortcomings must be progressively eliminated, and the public must give patient and sympathetic support to the best and noblest endeavors of organized labor. Both capital and labor have their legitimate functions to perform in the common task of social advancement: neither is perfect, but both are striving in their own way to reach higher levels. Both must be made fully accountable to society for the power intrusted to their keeping.

CONWAY, ARKANSAS, MAY, 1926.

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THE author was born March 5, 1889, on a farm near Maryville, Nodaway County, Missouri. In January, 1907, together with his parents, he moved to Athens, Henderson County, Texas. All of his early schooling was in a little ungraded rural school. In the late fall of 1907 he entered Alexander Collegiate Institute, Jacksonville, Texas, from which he graduated in May, 1911, with a few hours of college work to his credit. The following fall he entered Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas, and graduated with the A.B. degree in June, 1914. The following year was spent teaching in a little high school at Stratford, Texas. The school year of 1915-16 was spent at Columbia University and the M.A. degree was secured. The next year was spent as Professor of History and Economics at his old preparatory school, which had become a Junior College. The next year he went to Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas, as Acting Professor of History during the absence of the head of the department. The summer and fall was spent in Camp Pike in the officers' training school. In January, 1919, he returned to Hendrix College as Assistant Professor of History and Economics. One summer was spent at the University of Missouri, three summers were spent at the University of Wisconsin, and in the fall of 1923 he returned to Columbia University and completed the residence requirements for the Ph.D. degree the following summer, after which he returned to Hendrix College as Professor of Economics. During the two years at Columbia University he attended the general seminar directed by Professors Seligman, Mitchell, Seager, and Simkhovitch.