

**Historical Marker - L1413C - Ten Hours or No Sawdust/ Ten Hours or No Sawdust
(Marker ID#:L1413C)**



Front - Title/Description

Ten Hours or No Sawdust

When Bay City's sawmills opened in 1885, mill owners notified workers that wages would be twelve to twenty-five percent lower than in 1884. On July 6, 1885, Bay City millhands began to walk off the job. Their slogan, "Ten Hours or No Sawdust," represented their demand for a ten-hour workday, higher wages and semimonthly pay. On July 9, 1885, D. C. Blinn, editor of Bay City's Labor Vindicator and a member of the Knights of Labor, held a rally at Bay City's Madison Park. After the rally, millhands left by barge for Saginaw, where they closed the mills the next day. The demands of the millhands were rejected, and the sporadic violence that followed led the mayors of Bay City and Saginaw to seek help from the state militia and private detectives..

Significant Date:

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

Registry Year: 1987 **Erected Date:** 1987

Marker Location

Address: 801 Water Street

City: Bay City

State: MI **ZipCode:** 48708

County: Bay

Township:

Lat: 43.59813200 / **Long:** -83.89017800

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

Ten Hours or No Sawdust

On July 14, 1885, Governor Russell A. Alger, a wealthy lumberman, came to Bay City to attempt to resolve the strike that had closed Bay City and Saginaw mills. From the steps of the Frazer Hotel, across the street from this site, he spoke to a crowd of millhands, warning against further violence. On July 29 Terence V. Powderly, Grand Master of the Knights of Labor, came to the valley. He urged the millhands to return to work with a ten-hour day and reduced wages. Nevertheless, the strike continued for several weeks, with support from the people of Bay City. The mill owners, however, remained intransigent, and by late September the strikers were defeated. The ten-hour workday went into effect on September 15, 1885, by an act of the state legislature, but wages remained low.