





Believe this is related to: Striking miners and their families were gathered on Christmas Eve for a party in Italian Hall, when the cry of "fire" precipitated a stampede that crushed or suffocated seventy-three victims, the majority of them children. The identity of the person(s) who started the stampede has never been determined. Folk singer Woody Guthrie's song, "1913 Massacre", is based on this event.

Upper Peninsula of Michigan Copper Mines Christmas Eve Party Disaster

The **Italian Hall Disaster** (sometimes referred to as the **1913 Massacre**) is a tragedy that occurred on December 24, 1913, in Calumet, Michigan. Seventy-three men, women, and children, mostly striking mine workers and their families, were crushed to death in a stampede when someone falsely yelled "fire" at a crowded Christmas party**

The Calumet and Hecla Mining Company ("C&H") was the single largest copper mining company in the copper country in the Keweenaw Peninsula of northwest Michigan. One of the longest strikes in the copper country took place in 1913, and included all the C&H mines. The Western Federation of Miners first established a local in the area in 1908 but it wasn't until 1913 that the WFM had a large enough membership to effectively strike. At the time, there were perhaps 15,000 men working in the mines and the WFM claimed 9,000 of them as members. The membership voted in favor of demanding union recognition from management, and asking "for a conference with the employers to adjust wages, hours, and working conditions in the copper district of Michigan." The membership also voted to "declare a strike" if management refused to "grant a conference or concessions." After the vote was held, the WFM sent letters to the mines demanding the conference; the mine managers refused the request and the strike was called on July 23, 1913.^[2] The strike would not end until April 1914; the miners and the mines were still at a standoff at Christmas, 1913, in a strike that was then five months old.

After the first wave of grief had passed



A funeral procession for victims of the [Italian Hall disaster](#). The procession took place on Sunday (probably December 28, 1913) and was two miles long and lined by thousands.

following the incident, while there was bitterness against the company, it was considerably greater against an organization known as the Citizens' Alliance (the "Alliance"). The Alliance was funded by mine management and actively opposed the union and the strike. Knowing what poor condition the strikers were in, the Alliance took steps that purported to help the families. It offered money to the union, telling union leaders to spend it as they wished.^[citation needed]

The Alliance's offer was not unconditional. Rather, it insisted that Charles Moyer, president of the Western Federation of Miners, publicly exonerate the Alliance of all fault in the tragedy. Moyer refused. Rather than provide such an exoneration, Moyer announced that the Alliance was responsible for the catastrophe, claiming that an Alliance agent yelled the word "fire".^[16] Members of The Alliance subsequently assaulted Moyer in nearby Hancock, then shot and kidnapped him. They placed him on a train with instructions to leave the state and never return. After getting medical attention in Chicago (and holding a press conference where he displayed his gunshot wound) he returned to Michigan to continue the work of the WFM

***http://digarch.lib.mtu.edu/showbib.aspx?bib_id=676762#, "The Italian Hall Disaster in Pictures", Michigan Tech Archives

** http://blekko.com/wiki/Italian_Hall_disaster?source=672620ff