

Educational materials developed through the Baltimore County History Labs Program, a partnership between Baltimore County Public Schools and the UMBC Center for History Education.

RS#03: Say Triangle Doors Were Never Locked

New York Times, December 21, 1911. This article details the trial of factory owners Harris and Blanck. The *Times* was known for being less sensational in their reporting than their competitors such as *New York World*.

Say Triangle Doors Were Never Locked: More Witnesses Contradict the Testimony of Harris & Blanck's Girl Employees.

Max D. Steuer counsel for Isaac Harris and Max Bostwick, proprietors of the Triangle Waist Company, where 147 persons lost their lives in a fire on March 25, and who are now on trial for manslaughter in the first and second degrees before Judge Crain in General Sessions, called several witnesses yesterday, who testified that the Washington Place doors on the night and ninth floors were always available in case of need, and that the keys were always left in the locks of both doors.

Ida Mittleman and Anna Mittleman, who worked on the ninth floor, the first called both testified that they had never seen the Washington Place door on that floor without a key in the lock, and that it was not locked to their knowledge on the day of the fire.

"Did you turn the key in the door yourself on the day of the fire and find it unlocked?" asked Assistant District Attorney Charles Bostwick while cross-examining Ida Mittleman.

"No I did not try the lock myself. I waited for the Washington Place elevator and then ran to the Greene Street side. I met a crowd of girls coming from that place, and we crowded back to the elevators on the Washington Place side. I was pushed into the elevator. Then I saw my sister and gave a scream and she got into the elevator as it was going down."

"You are sure that there was a string attached to the key you saw?"

"Yes, I am positive about that."

...Samuel Rubin of 307 St. Anna Avenue, a patternmaker, said he was discharged two weeks before the fire, and had never seen the Washington Place door locked. He admitted on cross-examination that he was willing to return to the employ of Harris & Blanck if he could. Hyman Silverman of 142 Carlton Street, Newark, testified that he worked in the Triangle Waist Company for nine years, and that he had often seen the superintendent pass through the Washington Place door. Other witnesses were called who testified to the same thing, but admitted on cross-examination that they were only in the building on special occasions

The New York Times. "Say Triangle Doors Were Never Locked : More Witnesses Contradict the Testimony of Harris & Blanck's Girl Employees" December 21, 1911.

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/triangle/trianglenyt1221.html> (accessed June 28, 2010).