

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#09: 147 Dead, Nobody Guilty

Literary Digest, January 6, 1912. This magazine publication included many opinion articles and an analysis of news events. The following source is an opinion article written by an unknown author.

147 Dead, Nobody Guilty

Of all the various individuals who should have known that the hundreds of shirtwaist workers in Harris & Blanck's place worked in peril of their lives - proprietors of the factory, city and state inspectors, superintendents, and those who passed on plans and licenses, all the personnel engaged in the empty farce of protecting lives in workshops - out of the whole list of those whose responsibility seemed more or less obvious, the public prosecutor chose the proprietors the ones whose responsibility might not surely be demonstrated. The charges against them have not been established to the satisfaction of a jury. There is little hope that the bringing home of personal guilt to any one of the many who took desperate chances with the lives of those workers in Washington Place may teach a salutary lesson of official or private responsibility.

The monstrous conclusion of the law is that the slaughter was no one's fault, that it couldn't be helped, or perhaps even that, in the fine legal phrase which is big enough to cover a multitude of defects of justice, it was 'an act of God!' This conclusion is revolting to the moral sense of the community.

Literary Digest. "147 Dead, Nobody Guilty." April 29, 1911.

http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/primary/newspapersMagazines/ld_010612.html?location=Investigation,+Trial,+and+Reform (accessed June 28, 2010).