

Module 06: "Which Side Are You On?" The Flint Sit-Down Strike, 1936-37

Evidence 8: "The Fisher Strike"

A

Introduction

(Sung to the tune of "The Fishers and the Coys.")

The Fisher Strike retells the story of the origins of the Flint sit-down strike. It appeared in the *Flint Auto Worker*, a local UAW newspaper, only a week after the events it depicts. To pass the long hours inside the factory, sit-down strikers wrote and sang songs like the one below that celebrated their achievement, belittled GM officials, and glorified the union.

Questions to Consider

- What event did the song depict as the impetus behind the strike? How did they interpret GM's actions here?
- How did the song portray union members? How did it portray GM's managers?

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Gather round me and I'll tell you all a story
Of the Fisher Body Factory Number One.
When the dies they started moving,
The Union Men they had a meeting,
To decide right then and there what must be done.

Chorus:

These four thousand union boys,
They made a lot of noise,
They decided then and there to shut down tight.
In the office they got snooty,
So we started picket duty,
Now the Fisher Body Shop is out on strike.

Now this strike it started one bright Wednesday evening,

When they loaded up a boxcar full of dies.
When the union boys they stopped them,
And the railroad workers backed them,
The officials in the office were surprised.

Now they really started out to strike in earnest;
They took possession of the gates and building, too.
They placed a guard in either clockhouse
Just to keep the non-union men out,
And they took the keys and locked the gages up, too.

Source:

Alan Lomax, compiler, Pete Seeger, music transcriber and editor, *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard Hit People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 240-41.