

The increase but the
congress given itself



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THE 1970 POSTAL STRIKE
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Seeing that I already work for the United States Postal Service I decided to brush up and learn about my company's history. Starting with the management history of the United States Postal Service to say the least its horrible and sadly not much has changed.

From an interview at that time an employee stated that management was outdated. Every article I read had nothing about getting any support from management or even management as well. The strike started in New York City and their working conditions were health hazardous.

An employee described it to be "dungeons," dirty, stifling, too hot in summer, and too cold in winter. During the strike the union members were right along side with everyone else striking as well. Things had gotten so bad the president during that time which was Nixon had done a televised command telling the postal workers to return back to work. Unfortunately, it didn't work so even the union leaders tried pleading with the postal workers to return as well and still no budge. From the looks of it the union leaders were either not on the side of the postal workers or was just in fear and respecting their president's command. There was always constant complain their low wage which by the way was the amount of \$6,200 to start, and workers with 21 years of service averaged only \$8,440. As well as the obvious poor working conditions that were unsafe and unhealthy. From 1967 to 1969 the postal workers were not granted a pay increase but the Congress given itself a 41% increase and that seems to be the action started happening.

On March 17, 1970, in New York City, members of National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 36 met in Manhattan and voted to strike. Picketing began just after midnight, on March 18. A lot of people didn't know this including myself but the Post Office was home to many African Americans and the Civil Rights movement was a huge contributor to The 1970 Postal Strike.

Word got out about the postal strike that was happening in New York City and other postal locations from other states joined in because they all shared the same issues on the job. The amount of postal workers who went on strike rose to reach more than 210,000 and it spread across the nation. As stated before, President Nixon got on television and commanded that the postal workers return back to work and his wishes were ignored and the workers grew angry. The strike shut down New York's financial industry, kept 9,000 youths from receiving draft notices, delayed the mailing of census forms and tax refunds, and it interrupted communication around the world. Injunctions and heavy fines were levied on union leaders; but the membership paid no attention.

Even though it is illegal for the United States Postal Service to strike, the union had no control. The president then decided he would have 24,000 military personnel forces (Army, National Guard, Army Reserve, Air National Guard and Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Reserve) deliver the mail. This ended up being a very unsuccessful attempt. Finally, the strike was brought to the end after two weeks by the negotiation of the Secretary of Labor William P. Usery. The postal workers agreed to a 6% increase and were even granted retroactive pay of that with the addition of 8 percent contingent on enactment of the Postal

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Reorganization Act. All the articles I read mentioned the postal workers being granted the pay increase but no talk about the better benefits or better working conditions.

My opinion I would say it was a lost I would had held out longer on the strike seeing that the job they have is a greatly needed one because no one else delivers mail. Postal workers have in their contracts that they will not strike but there has been a different kind. In 2012 ten currently working and retired postal workers started a hunger strike to consolidation and closings of postal plants because that would mean 28,000 postal workers would be out of a job. The reason for the job consolidations and closings was because the post office lost \$3.2 billion in the first quarter of 2012 and has since been looking at cost cutting measures such as layoffs, staff buyouts and closings.