

# The Bandera PROPHECY

March 12, 2021

Today in Texas history

*Galveston Longshoremen Strike*

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On March 12, 1920, approximately 1,600 dockworkers in Galveston went on strike as part of a nationwide walkout. The ensuing battle between organized labor and open-shop factions stretched on for months.

The Mallory and Morgan steamship lines used scab workers to combat the strikers, who were members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA). The company employed white scabs to replace black ILA locals and black scabs to replace white ILA workers to inflame racial tensions.

In an effort to prevent violence, Governor William P. Hobby deployed a detachment of Texas Rangers, and the Mallory Company, fearful of conflict, suspended its Galveston operations.

In June the governor declared martial law and dispatched 1,000 National Guard troops. Eventually negotiations between the city of Galveston and the state government led to the withdrawal of the National Guard, and Galveston ILA locals finally resumed work between December 1920 and July 1921, but with a smaller pay increase than they had sought.

Ultimately, the dispute was a factor that helped foster anti-labor attitudes among business and political entities in the state.