

**Name:** Anne Walker

**Title:** The Crime at Homestead, Whodunnit?

**Subject:** Virginia and US History

**State:** Virginia

Virginia Standards of Learning VUS.8e

Description of teaching plan: Students will examine primary and secondary sources to determine who was mostly to blame for the events leading up to and the violence of the Homestead Steel Strike.

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### **Introduction, overview, and unit rationale**

It is very tempting for teachers to present history as a fait accompli. In this activity, students determine with minimal teacher guidance, who was to blame for events leading up to and the violence of the Homestead Steel strike while, at the same time, considering the events from multiple perspectives.

### **Unit goals**

Students will explore the events of the Homestead Strike and determine who was to blame and what actions could have been taken to prevent the violence.

### **State Standard VUS.8e**

The student will apply social science skills to understand how the nation grew and changed from the end of Reconstruction through the early twentieth century by evaluating and explaining the social and cultural impact of industrialization, including rapid urbanization. (Included in this standard are captains of industry and robber barons, formation of labor unions and the Homestead Strike)

### **Daily Tasks**

Day 1 As a class, review the Encyclopedia Britannica article on the Homestead Strike. Tell students that a crime has been committed, but the details are unclear. Students will be challenged to work together to determine the answers to the following questions from the Forensic Analysis: What crime took place? Who is responsible for the crime? (Perpetrators.) Who were the victims or targets of the action? Where did the crime take place? When did the crime happen?

(Time/exact date when available.) How was the crime committed? (How was the crime carried out?) Why—What were the motives or reason(s) why this crime was committed?

Divide students into 4 groups. Two groups will read Set 1. Two groups will be assigned Set 2. As they examine the evidence, they should consider the questions from Stanford History Education Group's Historical Thinking Chart (attached) with an emphasis on the reliability of each source. As they review the evidence, they should discuss the guiding questions for the document.

Day 2 Students will merge into two large groups with representation from Set 1 and 2 (alternatively the teacher may reassign the 4 original groups to mix the participants). Students will present their findings to students who read the other set.

As a group, the students will complete the Forensic Analysis.

Whole group discussion questions:

- What crime took place?
- Who is responsible for the crime? (Perpetrators.)
- Who were the victims or targets of the action?
- Where did the crime take place?
- When did the crime happen? (Time/exact date when available.)
- How was the crime committed? (How was the crime carried out?)
- Why—What were the motives or reason(s) why this crime was
- How could the violence have been prevented?

If students need prompting, ask them if they can make a case for the “other side”? Can they find evidence to support the theory that workers/management were to blame? Once students have been exposed to the answers to the above questions from both perspectives, have them write a Forensic Report on their final findings. The Forensic Report is a summary of their analysis, citing the evidence they found most compelling from both sets.

### **Formal and informal assessment**

This is intended to be largely a discussion-based activity. However, students could write responses to the guiding questions as in informal assessment.

The formal assessment will be how students interpret the evidence on their Forensic Report.

### **Technological needs**

This activity has been set up to be paper based. However, the documents could be shared electronically to facilitate zooming in.

Students could also have access to the internet for further information/research they need to complete their Forensic Report.



**Material needed to complete the unit**

1 copy per student:

Encyclopedia Britannica Article

Historical Thinking Chart

Forensic Analysis

2 copies per group:

Primary Sources Set 1 and Guiding Questions

Primary Sources Set 2 and Guiding Questions

**Other sources to consider**

[Resources on the 1892 Homestead Steel Strike @ Pitt Archives: Strike Information](#)

[Investigation of the employment of Pinkerton detectives in connection with the labor troubles at Homestead, Pa.](#)

[Rivers of Steel Museum and Archives Collections](#)

## Homestead Strike

Adamczyk, Joseph. "Homestead Strike". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 4 Mar. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Homestead-Strike>. Accessed 26 July 2022.

Homestead Strike, also called Homestead riot, was a violent labor dispute between the Carnegie Steel Company and many of its workers that occurred on July 6, 1892, in Homestead, Pennsylvania. The strike pitted the company's management (which included owner American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and American industrialist Henry Clay Frick), the strikebreakers (replacement workers) who had been hired, and the Pinkerton National Detective Agency against members of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, who worked for the company. A gun battle resulted in which a number of Pinkerton agents and strikers were killed, and many were injured.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Andrew Carnegie had built the Carnegie Steel Company into one of the largest and most-profitable steel companies in the United States. The Homestead steel mill, located a few miles from Pittsburgh along the Monongahela River, was one of the largest of Carnegie's mills. Over the course of the 1880s, several unions were broken at other mills and industrial plants around the country, but in 1892 the workers of the Homestead mill were still represented by the powerful Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers. Although the union was made up of skilled workers and craftsmen, they were also supported by some 3,000 nonunion workers, who were overwhelmingly eastern and southern European immigrants and their sons.

The contract between the union and Carnegie Steel was set to expire on July 1, 1892, and Carnegie, who was in Scotland at the time, gave his operations manager, Frick, *carte blanche* to break the union ahead of this deadline. Frick opened his campaign by cutting the workers' wages. The union, understandably, rejected the wage cut. In late June, Frick responded by locking the workers out and building a massive barbed-wire-topped fence around the plant. The workers dubbed the plant "Fort Frick." On July 2 Frick fired all 3,800 workers, and during the dark early hours of July 6, a force of 300 Pinkerton agents—private security guards hired by Frick—traveled up the river in two covered barges to occupy the plant.

The workers understood that this was the prelude to replacing them with nonunion laborers, whom they called "scabs." Thousands of workers and their families stormed the plant before dawn and rushed the pier where the guards were trying to dock. Inevitably, shots were fired, and for the next 12 hours, the Pinkertons and the workers exchanged intense fire. Eventually, the workers accepted the surrender of the Pinkertons, who were led off their barges and to the local jail for protection. However, many Pinkertons were savagely beaten by the crowd along the way to the jail, and the barges they arrived on were burned. Later that night the Pinkertons were released and sent away from the town on a train bound for Pittsburgh. At least three Pinkertons and seven workers were killed during the battle and its aftermath.

The workers then took control of the steel mill, but this did not last long. Frick asked Pennsylvania Gov. Robert Emory Pattison for help; he responded by sending in 8,500 soldiers of the state National Guard. The plant was turned over to the militiamen on July 12. By July 15 the plant was again operational but with replacement workers.

Public support for the strikers, undermined by the brutal treatment of the surrendered Pinkertons, suffered more damage with an assassination attempt on Frick by Russian anarchist Alexander Berkman, who was not connected to the union, on July 23. In the meantime, waves of criminal charges were lodged against scores of union leaders and workers. Although almost all were eventually acquitted, the charges meant that the union leaders languished in jail, out of touch with their members, as the strikebreaking proceeded.

The conflict between the union workers and the strikebreakers, meanwhile, took on racial overtones in the fall of 1892. The union barred African Americans; many of the strikebreakers, therefore, were African Americans brought in from the South. Given the alternatives they faced in the rural South, the steelworker jobs, even at the lower wages, provided them with a better life. Another riot in November 1892 pitted some 2,000 white workers against African American workers and their families, and several people were severely wounded by gunfire. However, by November 21 the union had given up, and some workers reapplied for jobs at the mill, agreeing to 12-hour days and reduced wages.

## HISTORICAL THINKING CHART

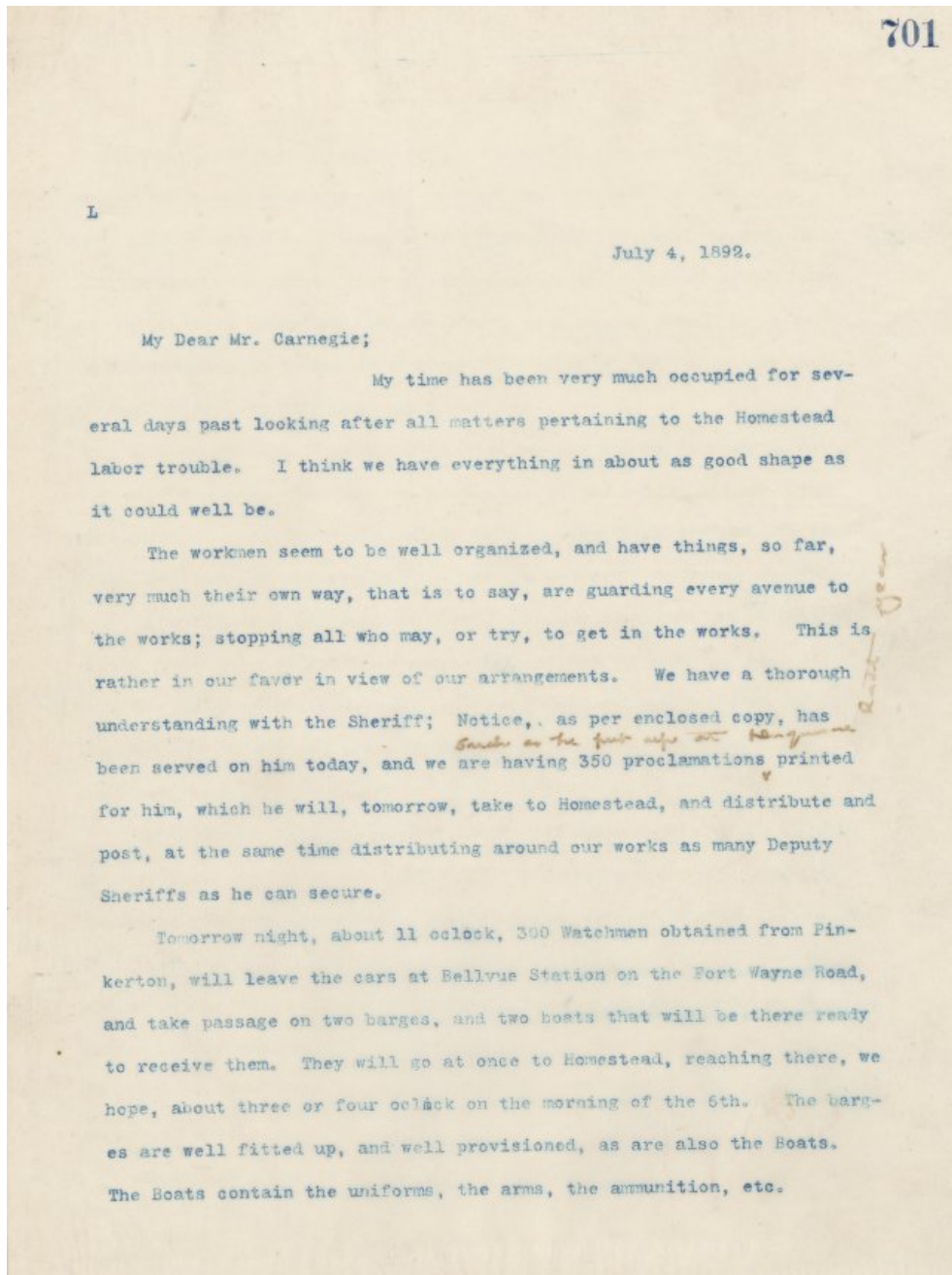
Historical Reading Skills	Questions	Students should be able to . . .	Prompts
Sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who wrote this?</li> <li>What is the author's perspective?</li> <li>When was it written?</li> <li>Where was it written?</li> <li>Why was it written?</li> <li>Is it reliable? Why? Why not?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the author's position on the historical event</li> <li>Identify and evaluate the author's purpose in producing the document</li> <li>Hypothesize what the author will say before reading the document</li> <li>Evaluate the source's trustworthiness by considering genre, audience, and purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The author probably believes . . .</li> <li>I think the audience is . . .</li> <li>Based on the source information, I think the author might . . .</li> <li>I do/don't trust this document because . . .</li> </ul>
Contextualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When and where was the document created?</li> <li>What was different then? What was the same?</li> <li>How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand how context/background information influences the content of the document</li> <li>Recognize that documents are products of particular points in time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the background information, I understand this document differently because . . .</li> <li>The author might have been influenced by _____ (historical context) . . .</li> <li>This document might not give me the whole picture because . . .</li> </ul>
Corroboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do other documents say?</li> <li>Do the documents agree? If not, why?</li> <li>What are other possible documents?</li> <li>What documents are most reliable?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish what is probable by comparing documents to each other</li> <li>Recognize disparities between accounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The author agrees/disagrees with . . .</li> <li>These documents all agree/disagree about . . .</li> <li>Another document to consider might be . . .</li> </ul>
Close Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What claims does the author make?</li> <li>What evidence does the author use?</li> <li>What language (words, phrases, images, symbols) does the author use to persuade the document's audience?</li> <li>How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the author's claims about an event</li> <li>Evaluate the evidence and reasoning the author uses to support claims</li> <li>Evaluate author's word choice; understand that language is used deliberately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think the author chose these words in order to . . .</li> <li>The author is trying to convince me . . .</li> <li>The author claims . . .</li> <li>The evidence used to support the author's claims is . . .</li> </ul>

## Set 1 Document A Letter from Frick to Carnegie

July 4, 1892

*That May, Andrew Carnegie sailed off for Great Britain, where he remained until the end of the year, leaving his General Manager, Henry Clay Frick, under his orders and in charge of the local scene at Homestead.*

Frick writes on the Homestead strike, the arrival of Pinkerton men, strike breakers, and newspaper sympathy for the strikers. July 4, 1892. Henry Clay Frick Business Records University of Pittsburgh <https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A31735066205083>



2.

Potter, with 5 or 6 of his men, will join these guards or watchmen, at Ashtabula tomorrow afternoon at 5 o'clock, and be with them until they land at Homestead. One or two Deputy Sheriffs will go down to Bellvue Station tomorrow evening, and accompany the guards or watchmen, on the boats to Homestead. We expect to land our guards or watchmen in our property at Homestead without much trouble, and this once accomplished we are, we think, in good position.

We have numerous applications from men who are anxious to go to work at Homestead, whom we can, by the use of the boats, deliver from time to time, into the works, where we have everything prepared to receive them and to care for them. Having secured the hearty co-operation of the Sheriff and such watchmen, we think that we will be able to afford protection to all the men who are willing to work for us.

The best information I can get leads me to believe that we have the sympathy of our men at Bessemer and at Duquesne, although I get some reports to the contrary.

Upper Union Mills signed the scale, and worked right along on the 1st and 2nd., and doubtless will go right along on the 5th. We are not quite ready at Lower Union Mills, so nothing has been done there so far. Beaver Falls is idle, inasmuch as we had some repairs that it was necessary to make, but we expect to be in operation there on the 11th. The Amalgamated reduced the Rollers tonnage from 45 cents to 30 cents per ton, that is about all the change that we will be able to secure at that place.

Homestead seems to be the centre of attraction, and I do not think



3.

anything has been left undone towards securing for us a complete victory at that place.

Doubtless by the time this reaches you it will be uninteresting, at least I trust so.

I sent you, on Saturday, the list of Appointees of the Carnegie Steel Company, Limited. I concluded that it would be wise to make Taylor Assistant Secretary, with the same duties that were attached to the position first intended for him. Utley will go into Palmer's office without any title.

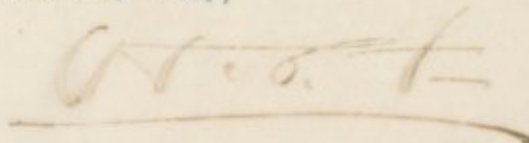
The new organization started off without any friction, there is but one fly in our ointment at present, and that is the Homestead trouble.

The newspapers, as usual, are inclined towards the enemy, and doubtless will raise a great howl when they discover that we have the audacity to attempt to guard and protect our property.

I had the article, written by Mr. Weeks from data furnished by us to him, reproduced in all of the morning and evening papers of this City, so that I think our position is well defined. We shall, of course, keep within the law, and do nothing that is not entirely legal.

Mailed you a cable to New York to be sent from there tomorrow, giving about as much information as I well could.

Yours Very Truly,



Set 1 Document B Telegram from Carnegie to Frick

July 7, 1892

Carnegie writes from Pitlochry, Scotland to tell Frick to continue to stand firm. He says that would rather the plant be closed than employ any rioter, and that Frick has his full support.

Telegram from Carnegie to Frick July 7, 1892 Henry Clay Frick Business Records University of Pittsburgh <https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A31735061570549>

Form No. 3.

## CABLE MESSAGE.

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CONNECTS ALSO WITH FOUR ANGLO-AMERICAN AND ONE DIRECT U. S. ATLANTIC CABLES.  
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**BRISTOL:** Backhall Chambers.

NUMBER	SENT BY	RECEIVED BY	No. OF WORDS.	FROM
25	Tom	No	47	Pitlochry 47

RECEIVED at 5 o'clk 7/7 1892

*Frick pagh*

*Cable just received all anxiety gone since know you stand firm never employ one these rioters Let Grass grow over works must not fail now you will win easily next trial only stand firm law & order wish I could*

ANSWERED  
RECEIVED  
JUL 8 1892  
P.M.  
CARNEGIE ASSOCIATIONS  
CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE.



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GLASGOW: No. 29 Gordon Street.  
BRISTOL: Backhall Chambers.

NUMBER	SENT BY	REC'D BY	No. OF WORDS.	FROM
95				

RECEIVED at \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 189

*Support You in any form.*

Frick Pittsburgh

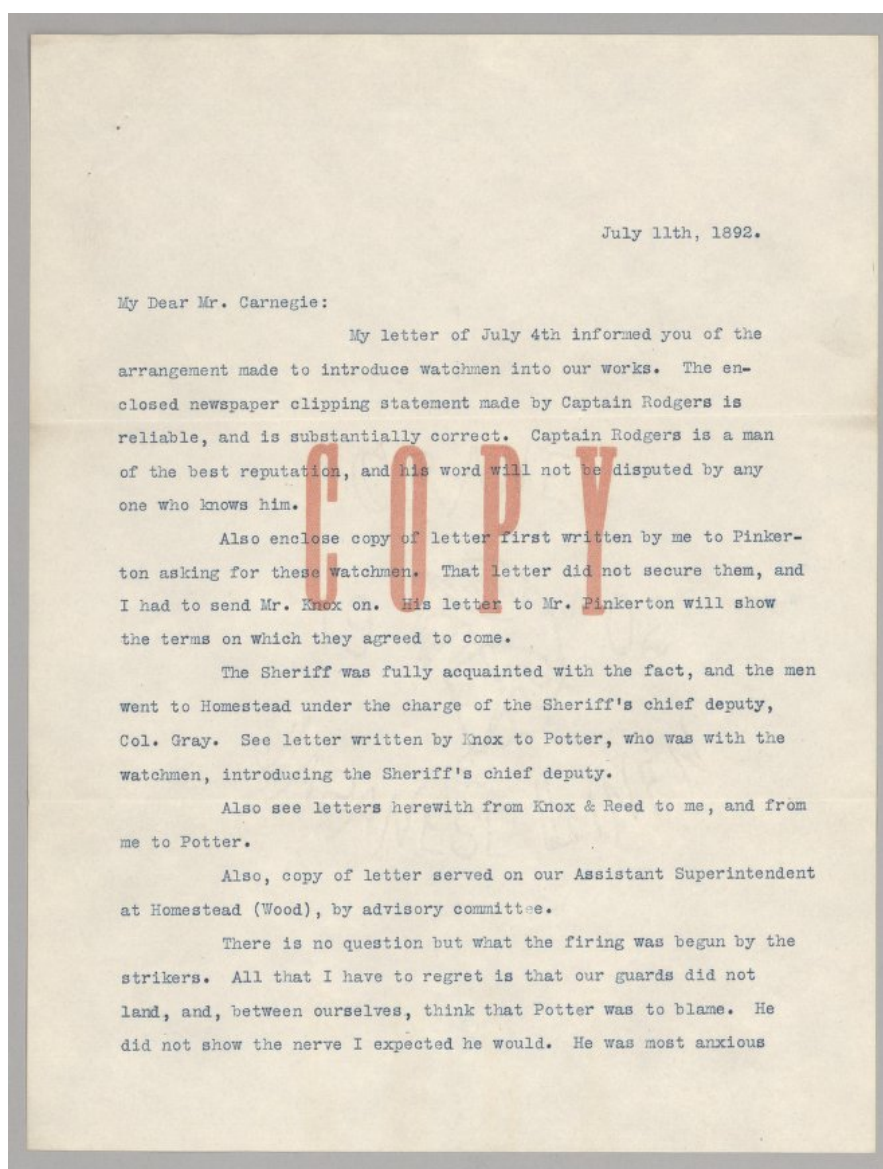
Cable just received. All anxiety gone Since know you stand firm never employ one these rioters. Let grass grow over works must not fail now you xxx xxx easily next trial only. Stand firm law and order xxx xxx support you in any form.

## Set 1 Document C Letter to Carnegie from Frick

July 11, 1892

*Frick writes that the violence at Homestead was begun by the strikers. He also says he believed the introduction of guards might spark this, but that it would allow them to regain control more quickly.*

Letter from Frick to Carnegie July 11, 1892, Henry Clay Frick Business Records University of Pittsburgh <https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A31735061570580>





A.C. #2.

to accompany the guards to Homestead, but failed at the critical time. Would like to say just here that I had not overlooked the fact that an effort to introduce guards at Homestead so soon might cause trouble, but was just as well satisfied that it would cause trouble if done at any later date, and we were only letting our property lie idle awaiting the pleasure of one of the worst bodies of men that ever worked in a mill, so concluded it was better to have trouble, if we were to have it, at once. We would so much earlier get our works started and in our own control, and I have not lost any opportunity since the trouble of urging the Sheriff to give us possession of our property, and, as he was unable, to insist that the Governor bring out the military. We finally have succeeded in the latter, and think before long we will be able to resume operations.

Everything going along very quietly at our other mills, but we may have some trouble at those yet under the control of the Amalgamated Association. A committee of five from those mills has just left me. Gave them to understand that under no circumstances would we confer with people who had assassinated our watchmen, broke in and attempted to destroy our property, and were now holding it by force. Told them if any mills now in operation, controlled by their Association, should see fit to stop, that when they did start it would be as non-union, as we proposed to operate Homestead in the future.

A.C. #3.

Enclosed is a copy of letter just received from Mr. Dillon, which has the right ring.

We have been in receipt of numerous letters and telegrams commending our position, particularly so since the people have become acquainted with it. At first there was a wrong impression, and a strong pressure brought to bear to get us to have a conference, but it is now almost all the other way. The one paper, however, in the United States that above all others deserves credit for the stand taken is the "New York Sun", and feel we are largely indebted to our mutual friend, Mr. Smith, for this.

We will lose no time in resuming operations at Homestead, but it shall be done with the greatest care, selecting the best men, and re-organizing that entire works, so that we do not employ any more men than actually necessary.

As you can understand, my time is pretty well taken up, and my letters consequently will have to be as brief as possible. Feel sure, when you become thoroughly acquainted with all of the details that you will be satisfied with every action taken in this lamentable matter. The best evidence of the character of the men employed at Homestead is shown by the manner in which they treated the watchmen after they had surrendered, and also, it would not have mattered who the men were that were in those boats, their treatment would have been just the same. They did not know they were obtained through Pinkerton at the time they fired on them.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) H. C. FRICK,

To ANDREW CARNEGIE, ESQ.,  
Rannoch Lodge,  
P.O. Kinloch Rannoch, Perthshire.

Chairman.



**Set 1 Document D Coroner's Report, Henry Striegel**

These are Allegheny County Coroner Inquest Case Files for one of the seven workers that succumbed to injuries sustained during the Homestead Strike. The case files are comprised of a Request for Inquest that provides a summary of the cause of death; a page of biographical information; and a statement by the jury that describes how the deceased suffered their injury and who is at fault. In each case the blame is placed on an "unlawful assembly" of locked out steelworkers.

Henry Striegel, Steelworker Coroner Inquest Case File Allegheny County, Pa. Coroner's Office Records, 1884-1976, AIS.1982.07, Archives & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh

<https://pitt.libguides.com/c.php?g=12523&p=66318>

Press  
Pittsburgh July 12 1892

Name Henry Striegel.  
Age 19 years.  
Place of Death St. Jagulinski's Yard Homestead  
Date " " " July 6. 1892.  
Time of accident " " "  
Place " " " As above  
Witnesses Statement. Nelson Striegel.

Remarks Shot in neck during riot.

Continued Thursday July 26. 2 P.M.  
Monday August 2nd 1. P.M.  
Verdict Gun shot wound see Docket

### Set 1 Document E Coroner's Report, Peter Farris

These are Allegheny County Coroner Inquest Case Files for one of the seven workers that succumbed to injuries sustained during the Homestead Strike. The case files are comprised of a Request for Inquest that provides a summary of the cause of death; a page of biographical information; and a statement by the jury that describes how the deceased suffered their injury and who is at fault. In each case the blame is placed on an "unlawful assembly" of locked out steelworkers.

Peter Farris, Steelworker Coroner Inquest Case File Allegheny County, Pa. Coroner's Office Records, 1884-1976, AIS.1982.07, Archives & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh <https://pitt.libguides.com/c.php?g=12523&p=66318>

Press  
Pittsburgh July 17, 1892

Name Peter Farris.  
Age 25 Years.  
Place of Death Carnegie Steel Works, Monistell  
Date " " " July 6/92  
Time of accident " " "  
Place " " " Do above  
Witnesses Statement. James Stefanian.

Remarks Shot in mouth during riot

Continued Tuesday July 26. 9 AM  
Thursday August 2nd, 10 AM.  
Verdict Gun shot Wound see docket

**Set 1 Document F BURIAL OF THE DEAD: Henry Striegel, Thomas Weldon and Joseph Sotak Laid in Their Graves.**

**Excerpt from *The World*, New York  
July 9, 1892**

The funeral procession, headed by a band, proceeded to the Catholic church. The customary funeral service was gone through, then Father Bullion delivered a short address. He spoke with deliberation and force, and as he referred in scornful tones to the murders of the Homestead workmen there was a decided sensation throughout the church. Once the mother of Weldon fainted and a glassful of water was brought to her, while others of the mourners fanned her back to consciousness. During his remarks Father Bullion said:

“It is sad for us to note that the usually quiet and peaceful town of Homestead should have been transformed into a battle-ground. When we inquire into the reason for this we are told that differences exist between capital and labor which have not been satisfactorily adjusted and that, on this account, we experienced the scenes we have witnessed during the past few days—differences that exist between the great corporation, the Carnegie Steel Company, and the honest workingmen of Homestead.

“It is sad that it should be necessary to have recourse to the use of firearms. It is strange to me that these differences could not be adjusted in some other way than by such violent means.

“It apparently becomes necessary in the eyes of the firm to send to this peaceful town men who are called Pinkerton detectives, but whom I would rather call Pinkerton rowdies in order to murder honest workingmen who have taken possession of the property to defend it, and to which property they have a certain right, as Senator Palmer has said. I agree with him to an extent that the workman has a certain right on account of the length of time he has been employed—not the deed of the property but a certain claim—and that when he protects that property he is doing only what is right. As long as he does nothing wrong he has a right to expect permanent employment, and hence it is wrong for a mob to come here and deprive the workman of the right that is his.

“I hope the time will come when workingmen will have the right to permanent employment as long as they conduct themselves properly, and that laws will be promulgated so that there will not be occasion for such riots as have taken place during the past few days. I do not intend to speak here to-day in regard to the merits or demerits of the strike now going on, as I consider this neither the time nor the place.

“...Do not forget the man who has lost his life in endeavoring to protect his home and provide for his family. He merits our continued thoughts and prayers for the welfare of his soul and the temporal and spiritual welfare of the family he has left alone in the struggle against poverty. Our duty is plain. Let us see that it is performed.”

## Set 1 Document G Pinkerton Testimony

*Excerpted from the U.S. House of Representatives Report No. 2447, testimony given July 22, 1892, in Washington by Robert A. Pinkerton.*

Q. How many human lives have your employees taken since your agency first entered the business of supplying men to protect the property of corporations and employers against the so-called "strikers," or to make effective so-called "lockouts?"

A. During the twenty years that we have been engaged in this strike work, not a single instance can be cited where our men have fired upon the strikers except as a last extremity in order to save their lives. During these twenty years three men have been killed by our watchmen in these strikes, up to the time of the Homestead affair. In each instance our men were sworn in as deputy sheriffs or peace officers, and whenever tried have been acquitted.

Q. It seems to me there is an inconsistency in your statement. You say that your men are armed for the purpose of defending themselves, and yet you say they are not to defend themselves until after they are fired upon. Now, down in my part of the country it is generally too late for a man to defend himself after he is fired upon; he is generally hors de combat afterwards?

A. There is quite a difference between where you live and up here, although the law may be the same.

Q. Then they are not as good shots here as they are down there?

A. No, I do not think they are. In fact, if the firing at Homestead had been done to kill there would have been a great many more people killed than there were. I have no doubt if the men had wanted to use those arms they would have obtained possession of that yard, but they would have had to sacrifice a great many more lives to do it.

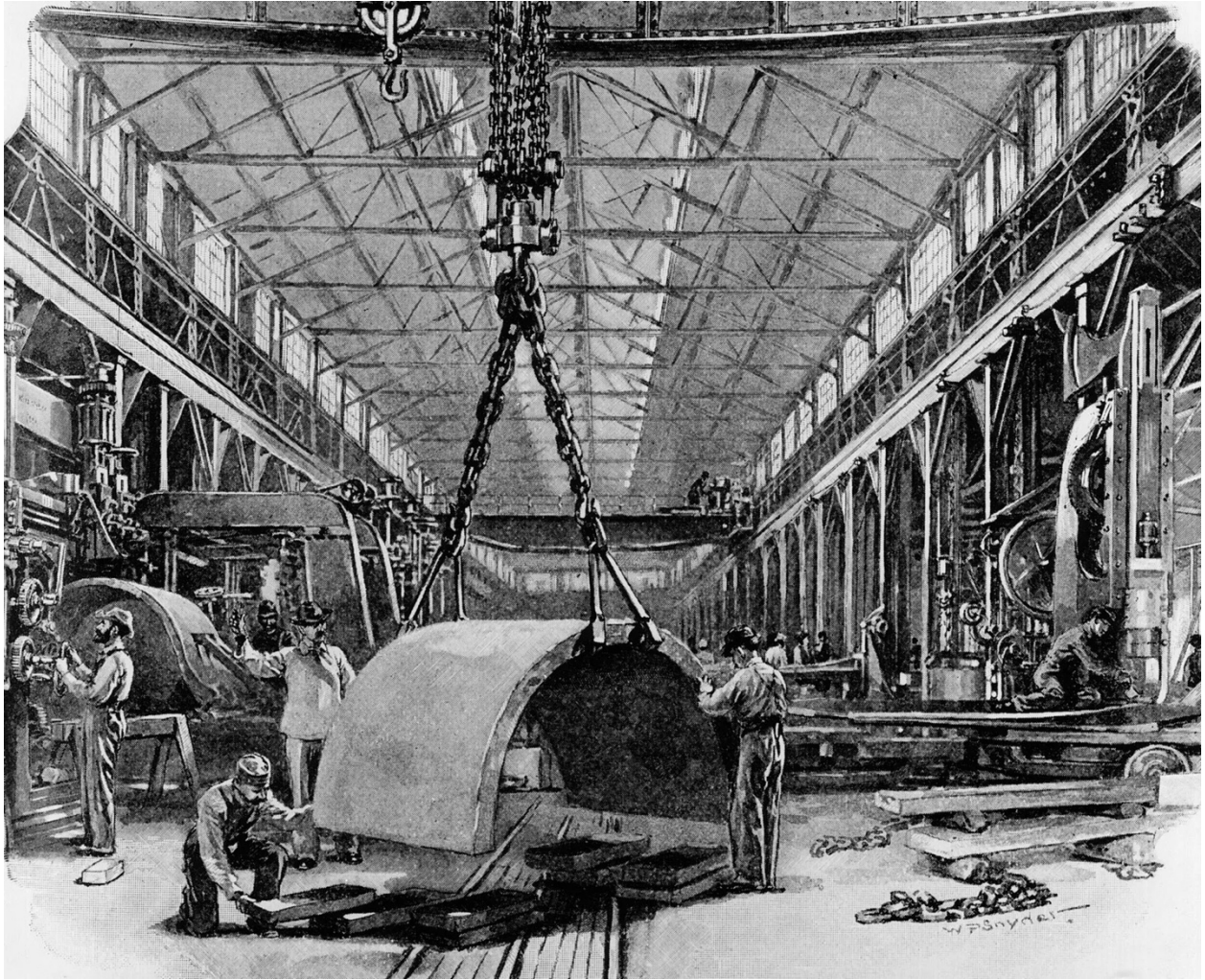
Q. There is one other question I wanted to ask you. Knowing the hostility of the Knights of Labor people and organized labor generally to your force, and knowing that in all probability sending your men to Homestead would result in collision, why did you send them there without the authority of the officers of Allegheny County, and without stipulating that they should be qualified as officers before they approached the Homestead works?

A. I stipulated that as far as possible. I had no reason to know that our men would go and be assaulted; we supposed our men would be landed on that property without assault.



**Set 1 Document H Homestead Steel Works**

*Homestead Steel Works, Homestead, Pa. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*



## Set 1 Guiding Questions

### Document A Letter from Frick to Carnegie

- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, what action does Frick report the workers have taken?
- According to Frick, why were the Pinkertons contracted?
- What impact would the strike have on the Homestead works?
- What action from the newspapers does Frick fear?

### Document B Telegram from Carnegie to Frick

- Two days after the violence, Carnegie sends Frick this telegram. From what you can make of the telegram, what directions does Carnegie give Frick?
- Do you believe these directions to be unreasonable? Why or why not?

### Document C Letter to Carnegie from Frick

- Beginning on the first page, what regret does Frick express?
- How did Frick justify bringing in Pinkertons as soon as he did?
- At the bottom of page 2, how does Frick defend his refusal to deal with the Amalgamated representatives?
- As more details have been released, how did public opinion change (at least concerning those who wrote to Frick)?

### Documents D and F Coroner's Report

- According to the coroner's report what killed these two workers?
- Were these deaths preventable?

### Document F BURIAL OF THE DEAD: Henry Striegel, Thomas Weldon and Joseph Sotak Laid in Their Graves.

- What reason does Father Bullion give for the violence?
- In the third paragraph of his remarks, what rights does Father Bullion give to the workers?
- Do workers have these rights?

### Document G Pinkerton Testimony

- What reason does Robert Pinkerton give for the instances where his detectives have fired on workers?
- Why were Pinkerton detectives armed?
- According to Robert Pinkerton, if his men had set out to kill strikers, what would have been the result?

What are your preliminary findings?

What evidence was most/least compelling and why?

Which witness did you find most/least reliable and why?

What questions do you still have?

## Set 2 Document A Testimony of John T. McCurry (excerpts)

July 8, 1892

*On July 8, 1892, John T. McCurry gave testimony to an Allegheny County coroner regarding what he witnessed from a barge and the tugboat Little Bill during the Battle of Homestead. McCurry describes how he was hired by Captain William Rogers to serve as a watchman on one the barges and his voyage with the Pinkertons from Bellevue to the Homestead Steel Works.*

Testimony of John T. McCurry (excerpts) Allegheny County, Pa. Coroner's Office Records, 1884-1976, AIS.1982.07, Archives & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Library System.

<https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A31735066257183/viewer#page/19/mode/1up>

\*\*Note: Rather than read all the excerpts, it is suggested that students jigsaw them, each reading one page and reporting back to the group. Although all 19 pages of testimony are not included, students may choose to follow the link above to find the full record.

sent me down to the barges.

Q What day?

A On Tuesday. So I went down there and I went on the barge, and I just had an idea that the barges were going some place the way they had them fixed up--beds and lots of provisions; and he come down about dinner time and he said "John, I want you to watch on one of these barges." He said "I am going to put you in one of the boats." Put me on the barges as watchman that night and on the boat the next day. I said "All right, Captain. I would rather go on the boat. I am a river man. I never done nothing else but on the river." He said "All right" and he went away and come down about nine or ten o'clock, and took the two boats then; they hitched on the Little Bill and the Tide. They hitched on and we went down to the dam. Some of them said we was going to Beaver for that dam down there. I thought that myself. So we laid there until twelve or one o'clock.

Q Did any one tell you that was where you were going when you got on the boat?

A Oh, no; just the men talking.



tled, and the Bill came back, and we landed, and the Bill took our barge, and we went through. She hitched on to both of them.

Q The Bill took hold of the other barge and proceeded on the journey?

A Yes, sir. Then we went on nicely until I suppose pretty near five, or five, o'clock. Before we got up there there was skiffs there, and they had signals; and there was a skiff with three or four fellows in that shot at us. They shot at us all the way along.

Q What kind of weapons, could you see?

A We could not see. It was kind of foggy.

Q Where were you?

A I was out forward on the barge. The men we had out there was about twenty men. The rest was all in the barges.

Q As you approached Homestead what occurred?

A Well, that is when they commenced firing. Before we landed or got up to the landing, you know, there was a whistle there, a given signal.

Q You heard the whistle?



5

A They gave that signal. I did not know what it was; I could not say positively--a little pump--and the skiff came down. I did not know what it was, but I suppose it was a revolver they shot at us with from the skiffs. Then we got out.

Q Was there any firing from the boat at that time?

A Not a fire. There was not a shot fired until we landed. I was just one among the three men that went out forward and helped to tie her up.

Q Tell about where they went to land.

A They went to land down below the end of the mill.

Q Did you see any fence?

A The fence came away up, away above it.

Q Were you near the fence?

A No, sir. We was at the lower end of the mill.

Q Was there a fence there?

A There was no fence there. There was a fence up by the side of the mill. I seen it coming down towards the river, but the river front was all open. There is a big lot of spiles along there right along the water's edge--I don't know what it was--and then we got the lines out.



A They told me they had a cannon there. I did not see it, though.

Q You attempted to land at a point above the bridge?

A Right above the bridge, the lower end of the spiles.

There is a big building right in front of where we landed; I don't know what it was--electric light or something building, and they got up in there. That is the way that man was killed, out through one of those windows--shot him around through the head.

Q The man that was killed was shot from the building?

A Shot from the building, yes, sir.

Q You saw him?

A I seen him when they carried him in; I did not see him getting hit. I did not go out after they commenced firing, at all. Well then we laid there until eight or nine o'clock, I suppose, and got these wounded men, and the Captain said he would take them to Port Perry--the Captain of the steamer.

Q Was that Rodgers?

A Yes, sir. Some of the men wanted to take them to Pitts-



burgh, and the Captain said he could take them to Port Perry quicker and get them to the hospital quicker than what he could to take the boat to Pittsburgh; so we carried them there and carried them up and waited on the train; and us boatmen went up and got our breakfast and came down and started down the river; but we did not get near them barges. We put the colors up, the American flag, thinking they would <sup>not</sup> fire it down, and they fired into us from both sides of the bridge.

Q What kind of colors?

A The American flag. The way I got hit, I was going around on the forecastle of the boat and I went back on the star-board side.

Q That was facing Homestead?

A Oh, no, I was on the opposite side. And just as I got hit there was a fellow hid down behind the coal box, but I did not fall, and I could walk, and he catched me; and they all ran back in the engine room on the Pittsburgh side, and I hobbled back and I laid down by one of the foot boxes in the engine room, and the rest of the men all went back. Captain Rodgers and his pilot, I believe, and



A I did, with that Captain in charge of the men. He stood at the door all the time. He told the boys he did not want them to shoot without they, the strikers, shot first. This occurred before we landed, when going up from the Davis Island dam, and above Lock No. 1.

Q Was this before there was any shooting from the skiffs?

A Oh, yes; yes, sir. We had just about gotten in sight of Homestead and then he just fetched that many men out. I do not know whether they was all armed inside or not, but their arms was laying there ready for them.

Q And then he gave this instruction?

A Yes, sir. That is what he said, not to shoot until they were shot at. Some had maces and some did not have their guns with them out there at all.

Q Was there any shooting from the boats at the skiffs, do you remember, Captain?

A There was not a shot fired.

Q Do you recollect when the first shot was fired from the boat, from the barges?

A I suppose just after we landed. That was the first shoot-



ing that came from the shore--from the bank.

Q Have you any idea how many people were there, in a rough estimate?

A Oh, my, the river bank was all full; and then these detectives commenced shooting after the strikers commenced shooting at them. I was back aft on the barge at the time, and I did not go back out again.

Q Was the stage then in course of being put out?

A I think it was, but I would not be sure whether they hauled it in or not. I don't know; I don't think they did; and then the firing commenced. There was no firing then from the time we got the wounded on the boat until we went away. We did not hear any more firing until we come back with the boat.

Q Captain, was it possible for the **Little Bill** to land at the barges again coming back from Port Perry?

A No, sir; she could not. The pilot was driven out of the pilot house, and the engineer had to get down, and had to crawl up to the throttle, and if she was thrown into the bank he would back her out, and the men that was not wounded, the engineer and the deck hand moved the tiller.



A Towards the boat, yes, sir.

Q Was there any threatening language you could distinguish at all from the bank?

A ~~A~~ "We will kill you", you know, and "You sons-of-bitches."

Q Were there that kind of remarks made?

A Oh, yes. When we were coming down they was rolling oil barrels down to fire the head of the barges. On the way back from Port Perry, coming back from Port Perry, they was rolling barrels and having them on fire, right up at the head of the barges, from the bank, calculating they would float down and burn the barges.

Q How long was the volley of shooting that you saw and heard?

A It was half an hour coming down. The heaviest shooting was at us coming down. I do not know whether they was shooting at the barges when we were coming down or not. This heavy shooting I seen ~~and~~ heard, it was a good deal heavier than it was in the morning. At that time there was nobody on the boat with guns. We did not have a gun on the boat.

## **Set 2 Document B Definition of Capitalism**

*Gregory, Paul; Stuart, Robert (2013). The Global Economy and its Economic Systems. South-Western College Pub. p. 41. ISBN 978-1-285-05535-0.*

Capitalism is an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and their operation for profit. Central characteristics of capitalism include capital accumulation, competitive markets, price system, private property, property rights recognition, voluntary exchange, and wage labor. In a capitalist market economy, decision-making and investments are determined by owners of wealth, property, or ability to maneuver capital or production ability in capital and financial markets—whereas prices and the distribution of goods and services are mainly determined by competition in goods and services markets.

## Set 2 Document C The Successes of Andrew Carnegie Timeline

*What is the American Dream that immigrants associated with the United States? Most would describe it as the ability to gain wealth and fame. This rags to riches dream would remain unattainable for most, with Carnegie being a significant exception.*

**1835:** Andrew Carnegie born

**1848:** Carnegie emigrates to the US. 13-year-old Andrew begins work as a bobbin boy in a textile mill, earning \$1.20 per week. He later takes a job in a factory tending the steam engine and boiler for \$2.00 per week. He impresses his supervisor with his penmanship and is offered the chance to work as a clerk for the factory.

**1849:** Andrew works as a messenger boy in a telegraph office, earning \$2.50 per week. Soon after he is promoted to the position of a telegraph operator and begins making \$20 per month.

**1853:** Andrew becomes the personal telegrapher and assistant to Thomas Scott, the superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad's western division, and is paid \$35 per month.

**1856:** An informant tells Carnegie of an upcoming strike and gives him a list of the labor organizers. Carnegie passes on the information to Thomas Scott, who fires them. The strike is broken before it begins.

Carnegie invests in sleeping cars

Carnegie takes a loan from a local bank and invests \$217.50 in the Woodruff Sleeping Car Company. After about two years, he begins receiving a return of about \$5000 annually, more than three times his salary from the railroad.

**1859:** Carnegie becomes the superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad's western division. He is now in charge of his department and earns a salary of \$1500 per year.

**1861:** Using money from his investment in the Woodruff Sleeping Car Company, Carnegie invests \$11,000 in an oil company in Titusville, Pennsylvania. He receives a return of \$17,868 after only one year.

**1863:** Carnegie's income is \$42,000. About half of Carnegie's salary comes from his investment in oil and only \$2400 from his salary at the railroad.

**1864:** Carnegie is drafted into the Union Army. His options include paying the federal government \$300 or finding a suitable replacement. Carnegie feels he has done his patriotic duty

by supervising telegraph communications and decides to pay a replacement \$850 to serve in his place.

**1867:** Carnegie founds Keystone Telegraph Company

**1872:** On a visit to England, Carnegie visits Henry Bessemer's steel plants. The Freedom Iron Company, which Carnegie formed in 1861, had been using Bessemer's steel-making process for several years. While in England, Carnegie realized steel's commercial potential and returned to America with plans to expand his steel business.

**1875:** Carnegie opens his first steel plant, the Edgar Thomson Works, in Braddock, Pennsylvania.

**1883:** Carnegie buys the Pittsburgh Bessemer company (Homestead Works), a rival mill

**1886:** In Forum Magazine, Carnegie publishes an essay defending workers' right to organize into a union. He also publishes Triumphant Democracy, which sells over 70,000 copies and celebrates the American belief in democracy and capitalism.

**1887:** Henry Clay Frick organizes a coalition of coke companies to resist striking labor, but Carnegie has a large enough share in Frick's company to force him to settle with the workers. The tension between the two men is resolved for the time being, but Carnegie and Frick will disagree on labor issues in the future.

**1889:** Carnegie publishes "The Gospel of Wealth," arguing that the wealthy have a moral obligation to serve as stewards of society. The following year, Carnegie's annual take-home pay will be \$25 million.

**1889** Carnegie proposes a sliding scale to Edgar Thomson Works

**1892:** The Homestead Strike occurs

A union contract at Homestead expires; Carnegie directs Frick to handle the situation on vacation in Europe. The workers have been organizing a strike, and the strike proceeds when they are locked out. Frick has prepared for a stand-off by hiring Pinkerton agents. The New York Times writes, "It is evident there is no 'bluffing' at Homestead. The fight there is to be to the death." The Pinkertons arrive and shoot it out with workers for about twelve hours. Although the Pinkertons surrender, they are forced to pass through a crowd of hundreds of workers, who beat them mercilessly, severely injuring twenty. The state militia is sent in to reclaim the mill, and strikebreakers are hired to re-open it. This incident marks the end of Carnegie's image as a friend of the worker.

## Set 2 Document D Selection of Strikes in the United States

1877	<p><a href="#"><u>Great Railroad Strike</u></a> The Great Railroad Strike of 1877, sometimes referred to as the Great Upheaval, began on July 14 in Martinsburg, West Virginia, after the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&amp;O) cut wages for the third time in a year. This strike finally ended some 69 days later, after it was put down by unofficial militias, the National Guard, and federal troops. Because of economic problems and pressure on wages by the railroads, workers in numerous other cities, in New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland, into Illinois and Missouri, also went out on strike. An estimated 100 people were killed in the unrest across the country. In Martinsburg, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and other cities, workers burned down and destroyed both physical facilities and the rolling stock of the railroads—engines and railroad cars.</p>
1877– 1878	<p><a href="#"><u>Cigar makers' strike of 1877</u></a> The cigar makers' strike of New York lasted from mid-October 1877 until mid-February 1878. Ten thousand workers walked out at the height of the strike, demanding better wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions, especially in the tenement manufacturing locations. The strike was supported by the Cigar Makers International Union of America, local chapter 144</p>
1886	<p><a href="#"><u>Great Southwest railroad strike</u></a> The Great Southwest railroad strike of 1886 was a labor union strike involving more than 200,000 workers. Beginning on March 1, 1886, railroad workers in five states struck against the Union Pacific and Missouri Pacific railroads, owned by Jay Gould. At least ten people were killed. The unravelling of the strike within two months led directly to the collapse of the Knights of Labor and the formation of the American Federation of Labor.</p>
1886	<p><a href="#"><u>Haymarket affair</u></a> The Haymarket affair (also known as the Haymarket massacre, the Haymarket riot, the Haymarket Square riot, or the Haymarket Incident) was the aftermath of a bombing that took place at a labor demonstration on May 4, 1886, at Haymarket Square in Chicago, Illinois, United States.[2] It began as a peaceful rally in support of workers striking for an eight-hour work day, the day after the events at the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, during which one person was killed and many workers injured.[3] An unknown person threw a dynamite bomb at the police as they acted to disperse the meeting, and the bomb blast and ensuing gunfire resulted in the deaths of seven police officers and at least four civilians; dozens of others were wounded.</p>
1886	<p><a href="#"><u>Bay View massacre</u></a> The Bay View massacre (sometimes also referred to as the Bay View Tragedy) was the result of a strike held on May 4, 1886, by 7,000 building-trades workers and 5,000 Polish laborers who had organized at St. Stanislaus</p>



	<p>Catholic Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to strike against their employers, demanding the enforcement of an eight-hour workday. A few days earlier, on May 1, a peaceful demonstration had been held in nearby Chicago, with similar demands.</p> <p>By Monday, May 3, the number of participants had increased to over 14,000 workers who gathered at the Milwaukee Iron Company rolling mill in Bay View. They were met by 250 National Guardsmen under order from Republican Governor Jeremiah M. Rusk. The strikers had shut down every business in the city except the North Chicago Rolling Mills in Bay View.</p>
1887	<p><a href="#">Thibodaux massacre</a> The Thibodaux massacre was an episode of racial violence that occurred in Thibodaux, Louisiana on November 23, 1887. It followed a three-week strike during the critical harvest season in which an estimated 10,000 workers protested against the living and working conditions which existed on sugar cane plantations in four parishes: Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. Mary, and Assumption.</p> <p>The strike was the largest strike in the history of the industry and it was also the first strike to be conducted by a formal labor organization, the Knights of Labor. At planters' requests, the state sent the militia to protect strikebreakers from ambush attacks by strikers, and work resumed on some plantations. Black workers and their families were evicted from plantations in Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes.</p>
1888	<p><a href="#">Burlington railroad strike</a> The Burlington railroad strike of 1888 was a failed union strike which pitted the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (B of LE), the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen (B of LF), and the Switchmen's Mutual Aid Association (SMAA) against the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad (CB&amp;Q) its extensive trackage in the Midwestern United States. It was led by the skilled engineers and firemen, who demanded higher wages, seniority rights, and grievance procedures. It was fought bitterly by management, which rejected the very notion of collective bargaining. There was much less violence than the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, but after 10 months the very expensive company operation to permanently replace all the strikers was successful and the strike was a total defeat for them.</p>
1891	<p><a href="#">Coal Creek War</a></p> <p>The Coal Creek War was an early 1890s armed labor uprising in the southeastern United States that took place primarily in Anderson County, Tennessee. This labor conflict ignited during 1891 when coal mine owners in the Coal Creek watershed began to remove and replace their company-employed, private coal miners then on the payroll with convict laborers leased out by the Tennessee state prison system.</p> <p>These former wage-earning Coal Creek coal miners repeatedly attacked and burned both state prison stockades and mine properties, all while releasing hundreds of the</p>



state convict laborers from their bondage to the mine companies. Many of these same Coal Creek coal miners were also wounded or killed in small-arms skirmishes during the Coal Creek War, along with dozens of Tennessee state militiamen.
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**Set 2 Document E Henry Frick Interview, Pittsburgh Post  
July 8, 1892**

I can say as clearly as possible that under no circumstances will we have any further dealings with the Amalgamated Association as an organization. This is final.

The workmen in the Amalgamated Association work under what is known as a sliding scale. As the price of steel rises, the earnings of the men also rise; as the prices fall, their wages also fall. The wages are not allowed to fall below a certain amount, which is called the minimum. Until now, the minimum has been \$25 per ton of steel produced. We have recently changed the minimum to \$23 instead of \$25. We believe this is reasonable because the Carnegie Company has spent a lot of money on new machinery that allows workers to increase their daily output, and therefore increase their earnings. The Amalgamated Association was unwilling to consider a minimum below \$24, even though the improved machinery would enable workers to earn more. We found it impossible to arrive at any agreement with the Amalgamated Association, so we decided to close our works at Homestead.

The Amalgamated men surrounded our property and blocked all of the entrances and all roads leading to Homestead. We felt that for the safety of our property, it was necessary for us to hire our own guards to assist the sheriff.

We brought our guards here as quietly as possible; had them taken to Homestead at an hour of the night when we hoped to have them enter without any interference whatever and without meeting anybody. All our efforts were to prevent the possibilities of a confrontation between the Amalgamated Association and our guards. We have investigated and learned that the Amalgamated men and their friends fired on our guards for twenty-five minutes before they reached our property, and then again after they had reached our property. Our guards did not return the fire until after the boats had touched the shore, and after three of our guards had been wounded, one fatally.

## **Set 2 Document F Coroner's Report, Edward Spear**

*This is the Allegheny County Coroner Inquest Case Files for one of the three Pinkerton guards that succumbed to injuries sustained during the Homestead Strike. The case files are comprised of a Request for Inquest that provides a summary of the cause of death; a page of biographical information; and a statement by the jury that describes how the deceased suffered their injury and who is at fault. In each case the blame is placed on an "unlawful assembly" of locked out steelworkers.*

Edward Spear, Pinkerton Guard Allegheny County, Pa. Coroner's Office Records, 1884-1976, AIS.1982.07, Archives & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Library System  
<https://pitt.libguides.com/c.php?g=12523&p=66317>

From West Penn Hospital.

Pittsburgh, July 17 1892

To **HEBER McDOWELL, Coroner.**

Dear Sir:

Please hold an Inquest on the body of

Name Edward A. D. Spear Residence Chicago Ill.

Age: 37 years        months        days. Admitted July 1, † day Thursday

Nativity New York By Ambulance

Married. Single. From Twenty Eighth Street

Occupation Clerk Examined by Dr. W. Farlow & Nallen

Suffering from symptoms of Gunshot wound through calf of right  
leg. Tetanus developed July 14th

Said injuries said to have been received on bridge at Homestead  
Wednesday July 6th.

Death took place Sunday † day, July 17 th 1892 at 10.30 o'clock P. M.

Remarks

M. J. McKeen M. D.  
W. A. Doster Supt.

Ad. 1. State the day of the week.  
Ad. 2. State whether by ABBREVIATION or FRIENDS.  
Ad. 3. State whether from a PREMISE or a RESIDENCE and give the name.  
Ad. 4. State whether from NATURAL CAUSES or from SHOCK (conscious or unconscious), due to INJURIES, and if so, give NAME, PLACE, DATE, NUMBER, CHARACTER, and EXTENT of injuries, always stating where indicated, whether RIGHT or LEFT.  
Ad. 5. State WHEN, WHERE, HOW, by what MEANS or PERSONS received, also whether ACCIDENTAL, SUICIDAL or HOMICIDAL; in falls, the distance, location and place; in BURNS and SCALDS, the CIRCUMSTANCES attending the same; in RUSOEVER cases, the line of STREET CAR, RAILROAD or CONVEYANCE; in WEAPONS, the character of the same, etc., always giving such information as will lead to an accurate knowledge of the case and facilitate judicial inquiry and justice.  
Ad. 6. State NAME, DATE, PLACE, CHARACTER and RESULTS of any OPERATION or AMPUTATION performed.  
Ad. 7. State here any important facts not embodied in the above statements.

### Set 2 Document G Coroner's Report, J.W. Klein

*This is the Allegheny County Coroner Inquest Case Files for one of the three Pinkerton guards that succumbed to injuries sustained during the Homestead Strike. The case files are comprised of a Request for Inquest that provides a summary of the cause of death; a page of biographical information; and a statement by the jury that describes how the deceased suffered their injury and who is at fault. In each case the blame is placed on an "unlawful assembly" of locked out steelworkers.*

J.W. Klein, Pinkerton Guard Allegheny County, Pa. Coroner's Office Records, 1884-1976, AIS.1982.07, Archives & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Library System

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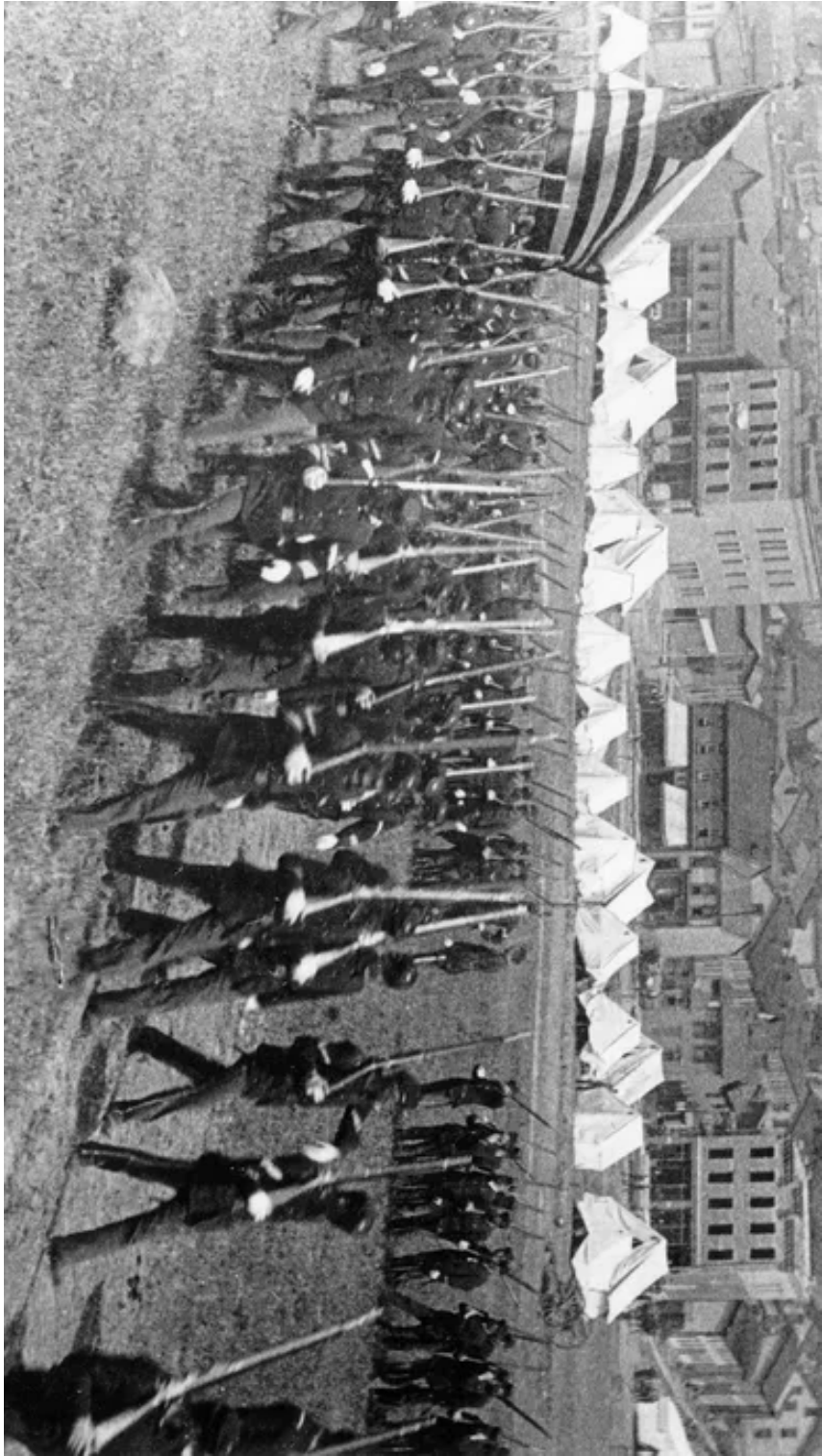
Press  
Pittsburg July 12 1892

name J. N. Rain.  
 age 47 years.  
 place of Death Homoeopathic Hospital.  
 date " " July 6. 1892.  
 place of accident " " "  
 place " "Carnegie Street Mrs. Mcmahall  
 witnesses Steward Grogan, Julian  
Report Homoeopathic Hospital,  
P. G. Hoffmann, Capt. M. B. Rogers, Capt. W. B. Minkert  
Col. J. H. Gray, Zach. Evans, Engineer, Forrest Pody, Sr.  
Geo. J. Cass, Edward Mahall,  
Steward, Geo. J. McQuinn

marks Shot on bargain during riot.

time Monday July 26. 70m  
Monday August 24 6 PM  
 report Gun shot wound see Docket

**Set 2 Document H Homestead strike, July 1892**  
 State militia entering Homestead, Pa., to put down the strike of July 1892.  
 Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



## Set 2 Guiding Questions

### Document A Testimony of John T. McCurry (excerpts)

- Who was John McCurry?
- What was his role in the events at Homestead?
- How does McCurry describe the events?

### Document B Definition of Capitalism

- What is the goal of the private owner in a capitalist society?
- In a capitalist society, what factors are considered when making decisions?
- What does the term “voluntary exchange” mean? How do you interpret it in relation to employee/employer relations?

### Document C The Successes of Andrew Carnegie Timeline

- How did Carnegie earn his fortune?
- According to Carnegie, what obligation do the wealthy have to society?
- What evidence can be provided to show Carnegie’s support of unions?

### Document D Selection of Strikes in the United States

- Prior to the events at Homestead, what complaints did workers share across different industries?
- Based on this strike history what would be the expected result of a strike?
- Who was to blame for the violence of these strikes?

### Document E Henry Frick Interview, Pittsburgh Post

- How did Frick explain the sliding scale?
- Why did Frick believe the change to the sliding scale was reasonable?
- Why did Frick contract with the Pinkertons?

### Document F and G Coroner’s Report

- According to the coroner’s report what killed these two guards?
- Were these deaths preventable?

What are your preliminary findings?

What evidence was most/least compelling and why?

Which witness did you find most/least reliable and why?

What questions do you still have?



## Forensic Analysis

What crime took place?	
Who is responsible for the crime? (Perpetrators.)	
Who were the victims or targets of the action?	
Where did the crime take place?	
When did the crime happen? (Time/exact date when available.)	
How was the crime committed? (How was the crime carried out?)	
Why — What were the motives or reason(s) why this crime was	
How could the violence have been prevented?	