

Name: Sean O'Neil

Title: Was Andrew Carnegie a friend of labor unions?

Subject: United States History

State: Pennsylvania

This activity uses primary source materials for students to consider if Andrew Carnegie was a supporter of labor unions as he publicly presented himself.

1. Introduction, overview, and unit rationale

The story of Andrew Carnegie is a compelling “rags to riches” tale that describes how a savvy immigrant from Scotland became one of the world’s most wealthy individuals as well as a pioneering leader in American industrial history. Carnegie’s legacy is not without controversy. Like many of his contemporaries during the Gilded Age, Andrew Carnegie commented on the role that labor and especially labor unions had in the 19th century. Many Americans are most likely familiar with Carnegie’s philanthropy in establishing public libraries and other cultural institutions worldwide. However, Andrew Carnegie is linked with many rancorous labor disputes in the late 19th century, most notably the 1892 Homestead Steel Mill strike, which

Gilded Age

2. Unit goals

Students should be able to identify multiple perspectives and types of primary sources.
Students should be able to make a historical claim using evidence from primary sources.

3. Connections to state standards

Standard - 8.3.12.A

Evaluate the role groups and individuals from the U.S. played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of the world.

4. Detailed description of what will happen each day

This lesson is designed for students with a foundational understanding of the Gilded Age, labor movements, and labor unions. Students will also benefit from a summary of Andrew Carnegie's career as a steel producer and his philanthropy knowledge of the 1892 Homestead Strike.

Day 1:

Introduce the unit guiding prompt: Was Andrew Carnegie a friend of labor unions?

Distribute Documents A, B, and C. Students should read and analyze documents with guiding questions. Encourage students to annotate while reading. Analysis can be done with the whole class or in jigsaw groups. It is important to debrief on these three documents and check for understanding before proceeding to Documents D and E. Reiterate to the students that the guiding prompt is: Was Andrew Carnegie a friend of labor unions? Key takeaways from Documents A, B, and C are:

Document A

- This is a newspaper article discussing Carnegie's legacy after his death in 1919, many years after his involvement in various labor disputes.
- The article obviously paints a positive picture of Carnegie's relationship with workers, often using Carnegie's recollections as a source.

Document B

- This is an excerpt from an essay written in Forum magazine in 1886 that Carnegie wrote entitled An Employer's View of the Labor Question.
- This article clearly articulates Carnegie's public support of labor unions and workers' rights to collective bargaining
- It may be worth mentioning that essay is published many years before various labor disputes that workers had with the Carnegie Steel Company.

Document C

- This newspaper article is from 1887, a year after Carnegie's Forum essays.
- Students could argue that Carnegie received at least some support from labor unions since the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers named their Pittsburgh Division after him.
- Again, Carnegie repeats his public support for unions.

After discussing the first three documents, have students draft an outline of a paragraph response to the guiding prompt. Students should draft a topic sentence/thesis statement and bullet point at least two specific pieces of evidence from Documents A, B, and C.

Day 2

Review previous documents by having students share out their draft positions to the guiding questions. It may be worth discussing which document they found most creditable/useful in supporting their claims. Distribute Document D and give students an opportunity to analyze it before reviewing key takeaways:

Document D

- This political cartoon was published a few days after the 1892 Homestead Strike.
- Students should be able to discern that the artist is highlighting Carnegie perceived hypocrisy by showing Carnegie's "two sides": one which donates money for libraries balance with a robber baron exploiting his workers through low wages.

Briefly ask students if Document D alters their draft responses to the guiding question. Then distribute Document E. Since this is a short document, it may be beneficial to analyze as a whole

class.

Document E

- This is a private telegram between Henry Frick and Andrew Carnegie discussing the Carnegie Steel Company's response to the gun battle that occurred between striking steel workers and private detectives. Unlike, the previous documents, this source was not intended for public consumption. (Note for instructor's context. Henry Clay Frick had a notorious reputation of anti-union businessmen who used very aggressive and sometimes violent methods to break strikes.)
- Carnegie clearly supports Frick's plan of action which includes not hiring any of the rioters (union workers) and if necessary closing the mill.

Discuss with students if and how this changes their drafts to the guiding question. Here are a few summative discussion questions:

- Which document is the most useful in helping answer the guiding prompt? Why?
- Which document do you find the most creditable? Why?
- If students feel there is not enough information to answer the guiding prompt ask: What type of document, source, perspective, etc. would be useful in answering the guiding prompt? Why?

Have students return to their drafts and now write a final response to the guiding prompt. Students should use and cite two specific pieces of evidence from the document to support their positions.

5. Formal and informal assessment

Formative questions during document analysis and discussion.

A Summative written response 1 paragraph response to the guiding prompt: *Was Andrew Carnegie a friend of labor unions?*

6. Technological needs - none

7. Material needed to complete the unit

Student handouts of documents.

8. Other sources to consider

Document Forum

<https://books.google.com/books?id=mPc7AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA119#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Document Telegram

<https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A31735061570549/viewer#page/1/mode/2up>

Document A: Excerpts from Newspaper Article about Carnegie's Legacy

These excerpts are from a newspaper article discussing Carnegie's legacy in the Pittsburgh Daily Post on Aug 12th, 1919, the day after Andrew Carnegie died. The following selections discuss Carnegie's relationship with his employees.

When accused of having violated in practice what he had preached in theory regarding labor, Mr. Carnegie often said in his speeches: "Labor, capital and business ability are the three legs of a three-legged stool: neither is first, neither is second, neither is third; there is no precedence, all being equally necessary. He who would sow discord among one of the three is an enemy to all."

At a conference with employees at Homestead over the method of payments of wages, years ago, and after it had been settled, one of the men said to Mr. Carnegie: "There is another unfair charge. The coal dealers of Homestead charge almost double for coal in small quantities." Mr. Carnegie's answer was: "hereafter our workmen get their coal at the exact wholesale cost to us - not one cent of profit."

Mr. Carnegie always delighted in telling this little incident which occurred in his office one day during a conference on the division of wages. After explaining the sum provided for salaries was sufficient but not wisely divided, a workman said: "Now Mr. Carnegie, you take my job-" The Scot exclaimed "Order, Mr. Edwards, order! Mr. Carnegie takes no man's job."

Telling about the consultations he had with his workman while a witness before the United States Industrial Relations committee, Mr. Carnegie said he liked to hear his men call him "Andy." "I would rather have had it than 'Andrew' or 'Mr. Carnegie,'" he said. "There is no sympathy about these. But once you have poor men call you 'Andy' you can get sling with them."

- "Carnegie Made Leader by Veteran Men; Odd incidents in Life"
Pittsburgh Daily Post, August 12th, 1919

When was this source produced? Who is the intended audience?

According to Document A, does Andrew Carnegie has a friendly or unfriendly relationship with his workers?

Cite two specific examples to support your answer to the previous question.

Document B : An Employer's View of the Labor Question

Labor relations and the right of collective bargaining (right to create a union) was quite a subject of debate during the life of Andrew Carnegie. As a successful industrialist, Carnegie wrote two essays in 1886 about labor relations in Forum magazine. Written around the time of the Haymarket Riot in Chicago, Carnegie affirms that workers have a right to unionize.

Some establishments in America have refused to recognize the right of men to form themselves into these unions; although I am any concern in England would dare to take this position. This policy, however, may be regarded as only a temporary phase of the situation. The right of the workingmen to combine and to form trades-unions is no less sacred than the right of the manufacturer to enter into associations and conferences with his fellows, and it must be sooner or later conceded. Indeed, it gives one but a poor opinion of the American workman if he permits himself to be deprived of a right which his fellow in England has conquered for himself long since. My experience has been that trades-unions upon the whole are beneficial both to labor and to capital. They certainly educate the workingmen, and give them a truer conception of the relations of capital and labor than they could otherwise form. The albest and best workmen eventually come to the front in these organizations, and it may be laid down as a rule that the more intelligent the workman the fewer the contests with employers.

-Andrew Carnegie
The Forum magazine March 1886

When was this source created? Who is the author of this document?

According to Document B, what “right” of workingmen is sacred?

How does the author describe the benefits that both workers and employers receive from trade unions?

Document C: Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was a labor union that represented railroad workers. The following is a newspaper article announcing a new division of the union being organized in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Andrew Carnegie and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers

Recently a new Division of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was organized at Pittsburgh, composed mainly of engineers running on the Pittsburgh Division, which is No. 325, is named in honor of Andrew Carnegie, who was at one time Superintendent of the Pittsburgh division of the railroad. In return for the honor Mr. Carnegie wrote the following letter:

[To] Mr. W. R. Thompson, Corresponding Secretary,

‘Dear Sir. I am much pleased to learn from your favor of the 18th ultimo that the Divison 325 has been organized. As you know I am a strong believer in the advantages of Trades Unions and organizations of workmen generally, believing that they are the best educative instruments within reach...’

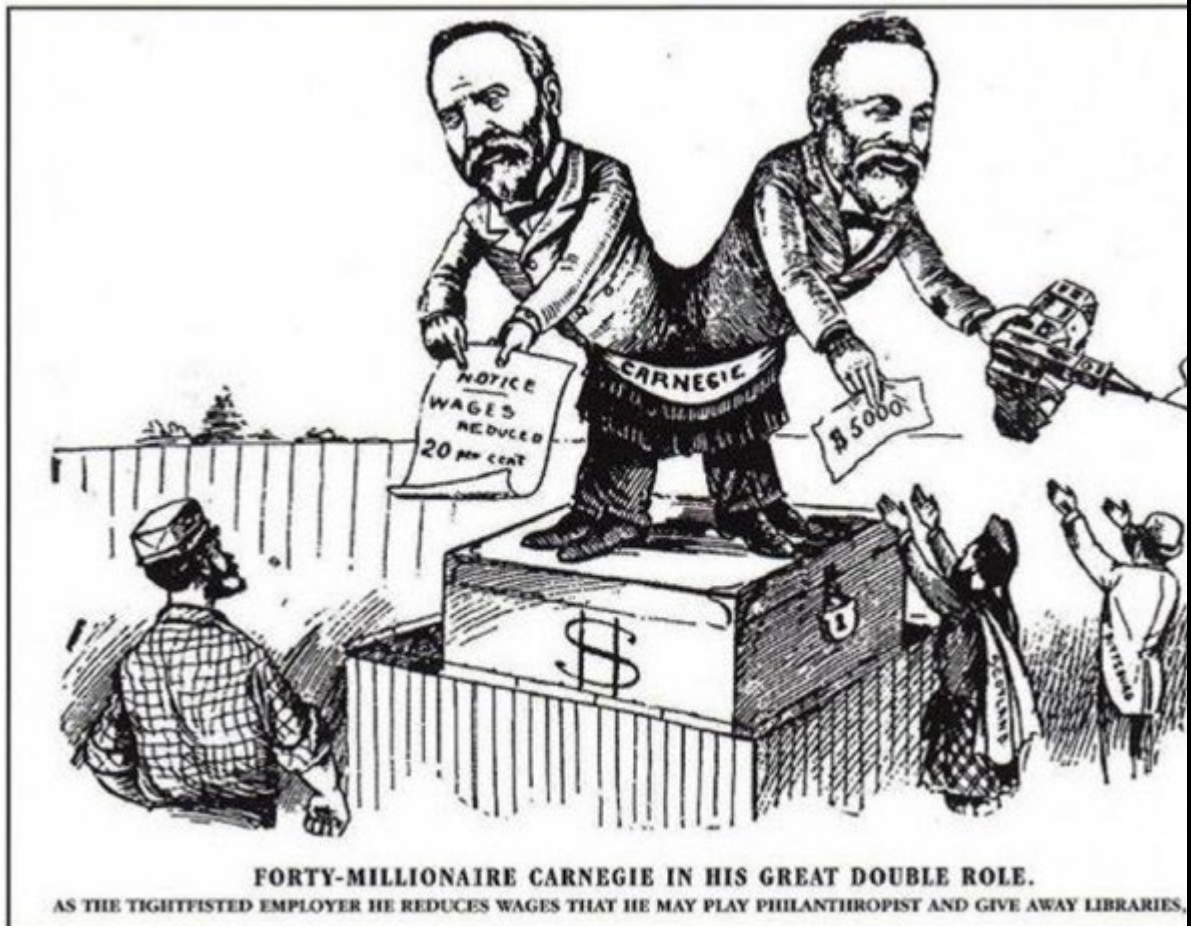
-*Altoona Times*, April 27th,
1887

Why might the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers honor Andrew Carnegie, an industrialist?

In his response to the Brotherhood, why does Andrew Carnegie state he admires labor unions?

Document D: Political Cartoon from *The Saturday Globe*.

This political cartoon appeared in The Saturday Globe on July 9, 1892, which is just a few days after a battle between steelworkers and Pinkerton detectives at Carnegie's Homestead mill.



Source: *The Saturday Globe*, Utica, New York, July 9, 1892

When was this cartoon created? What significant event had just occurred?

Who is depicted in his “Great Double Role”?

What do you believe is the artist's point of view of Andrew Carnegie? Cite one specific example to support your answer.

Document E: Telegram from Carnegie to Henry Clay Frick

After the Battle of Homestead, Carnegie Company President Henry Clay Frick sent Andrew Carnegie a telegram, who was vacationing in his native Scotland. In his cable, Frick reports to Carnegie the details of the Battle of Homestead and his intentions to regain control of the Homestead Mill. Frick also shares with Carnegie his plans to force the striking workers back to work without the protection of a union despite the likely public criticism. The following is Carnegie's reply to Frick's telegram.

Cable - received July 7, 1892.

From Pitlochry

[Scotland] [To] Frick, Pittsburgh

Cable just received. All anxiety gone since [I] know you stand firm.

Never employ one these rioters. Let grass grow over works [Homestead Mill].

Must not fail now. You will win easily next Trial. Only stand firm, law and order. Wish I could support you in any form.

-Andrew Carnegie

Who was the recipient of this telegram? What was his job?

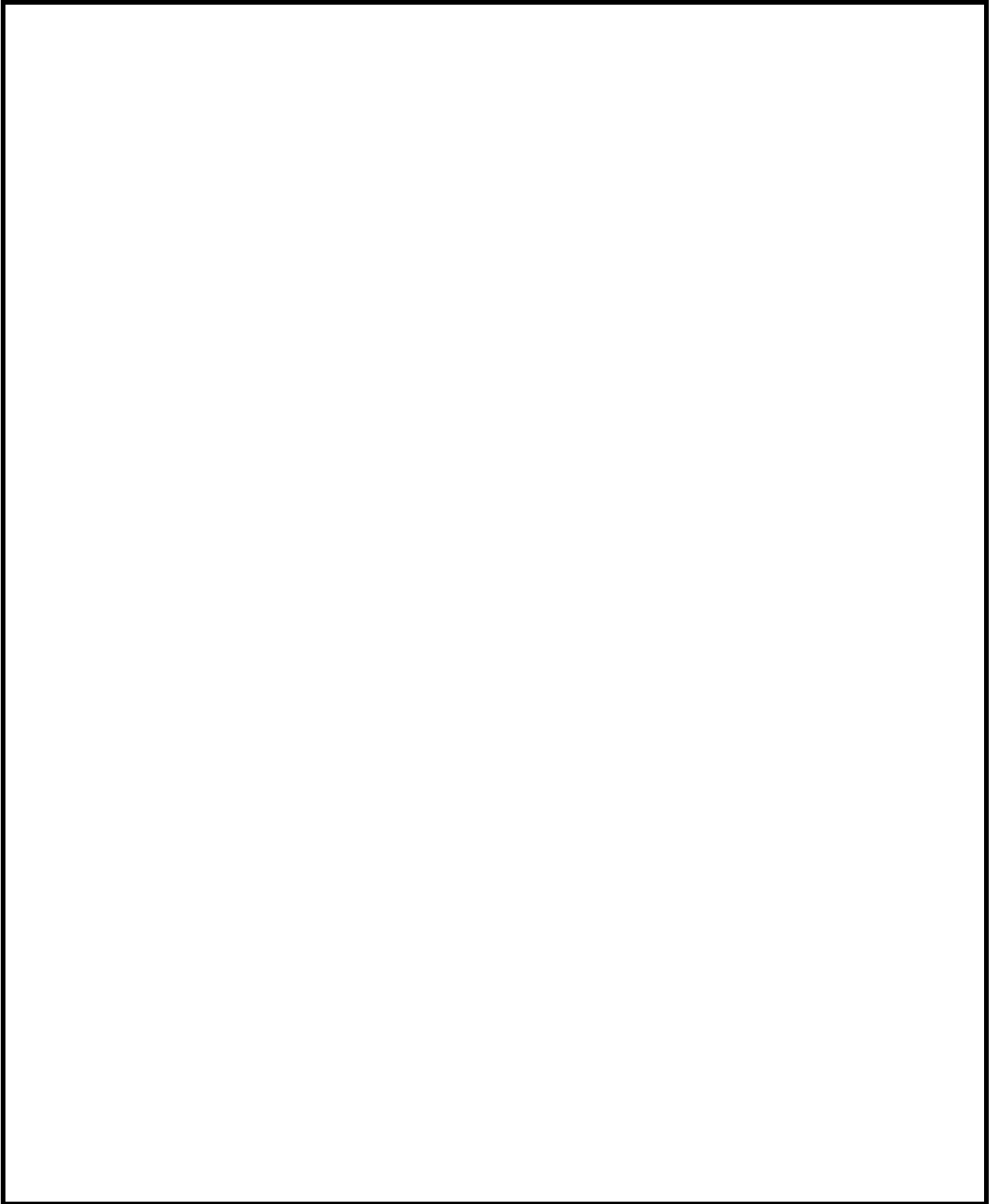
What event is being discussed in this telegram?

What does Andrew Carnegie specifically tell Henry Clay Frick to do about the workers striking at the Homestead Mill?

Name: _____

Directions: Write a 6 to 8-sentence response to the guiding prompt using two specific pieces of evidence to support your claim.

Was Andrew Carnegie a friend of labor unions?



Guiding Questions

Document A

When was this source produced? Who is the intended audience?

According to Document A, does Andrew Carnegie have a friendly or unfriendly relationship with his workers?

Cite two specific examples to support your answer to the previous question.

Document B

When was this source created? Who is the author of this document? According to Document B, what “right” of workingmen is sacred?

How does the author describe the benefits that both workers and employers receive from trade unions?

Document C:

Why might the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers honor Andrew Carnegie, an industrialist? In his response to the Brotherhood, why does Andrew Carnegie state he admires labor unions?

Document D:

When was this cartoon created? What significant event had just occurred? Who is depicted in his “Great Double Role”?

What do you believe is the artist's point of view of Andrew Carnegie? Cite one specific example to support your answer.

Document E:

Who was the recipient of this telegram? What was his job? What event is being discussed in this telegram?

What does Andrew Carnegie specifically tell Henry Clay Frick to do about the workers striking at the Homestead Mill?

Which document best describes Andrew Carnegie's view of labor unions? Why?

Summative Assessment.

Write a 6 to 8-sentence response to the guiding prompt using two specific pieces of evidence to support your claim.

Was Andrew Carnegie a friend of labor unions?