

10 Days that Unexpectedly Changed America: The Homestead Strike

1. What was made at the Homestead Mill? Why was this product so valuable?
2. Describe the living / working conditions in and around the Homestead Mill.
3. If you had no alternative (you can't move to find another job) but have to work under similar conditions to those faced by workers in the Homestead Mills, how would you respond as a worker? Explain your reasons.
4. Explain why Andrew Carnegie, the mill owner, and Henry Frick, his mill manager, locked thousands of steel workers out of the Homestead Mill in July 1892.
5. Assume that quitting is NOT AN OPTION. You need this job to survive and to feed yourself and your family. If you go on strike you don't get paid and you and your family suffer. How would you try and make the working conditions at Homestead better for yourself and your fellow workers?
6. One of the key elements needed for a successful protest is to win popular support – to have the public supporting you. What events caused the strikers to lose public / popular support for their cause? How did these events affect the strike?
7. After the Homestead Union was broken, what eventually happened to the steel workers' wages and living conditions in Homestead?

8. In your opinion, which side was “right” and which side was “wrong” in the showdown between Homestead Mill owner Andrew Carnegie and the Homestead Steel Workers Union? Explain your answer by providing examples from the video of the Carnegie document packet we are working on to support your opinion.
9. Based on the information presented in this dvd, as well as the telegrams shown below, do you believe Andrew Carnegie was “heroic” in the way he managed the Homestead Strike? Explain with evidence.

Document K

Source: Telegraph cable from Andrew Carnegie to Henry Clay Frick, Scotland July 7, 1892. From Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life of Andrew Carnegie*, Vol. I. New York City, Doubleday, 1932.

Cable received. All anxiety gone since you stand firm. Never employ one of these rioters. Let grass grow over the works. Must not fail now. You will win easily next trial. Only stand firm law and order. Wish I could support you in any form.

Source: Carnegie letter to Dod Lauder, his cousin and business partner, Scotland, July 17, 1892. From Joseph Frazier Wall, *Andrew Carnegie*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1970.

Matters at home bad – such a fiasco trying to send guards by Boat and then leaving space between River & fences for the men to get opposite landing and fire. Still we must keep quiet & do all we can to support Frick & those at the Seat of War. I have been besieged by interviewing Cables from N York but have not said a word. Silence is best. We shall win, of course, but may have to shut down for months.

Source: Andrew Carnegie, *Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920.

Nothing I have ever had to meet in all my life, before or since, wounded me so deeply. No pangs remain of any wound received in my business career save that of Homestead. It was so unnecessary.