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# PINK, AND GOLD AND GRAY PLAID

Sphex Club, March 2, 1995

This is a most interesting night for me. When I was invited to join this group two years ago, I immediately accepted but never really thought about that first presentation but it is here. And I can tell you that for me, someone who is not easily intimidated, it is intimidating. It is especially ironic that this be in this room where I am usually in a far different role and certainly not intimidated.

For my topic, I have chosen Pink and Gold and Gray Plaid. A rather "cutesy" reference to the Homestead Strike of 1892. I chose this not only because it is a very important event in the history of labor relations in the United States but also because of my personal interest in it.

You are probably not aware of my background but I was born and raised on the Monongahela river, south of Pittsburgh about 15 miles upriver from Homestead, the center of the coal and steel industry in western Pennsylvania. Incidentally, the Monongahela is the third largest river in the world which flows north and I promise you that those who live there say "Monongahella" and not "Monongaheela". I grew up two blocks from the Allenport plant of Pittsburgh Steel, a company that became part of Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel and, as many other US steel companies ultimately entered Chapter 11. It has since emerged from reorganization with significant employee ownership and, while not exactly prospering, it is at least surviving.

My father and two brothers worked in the mills for a combined total of about 135 years. Interestingly, my father was non-union and my two brothers were union members. I too was a member of the USW union and worked in the mill for two summers while a college student--truly an incentive for education.

While I graduated from St. Vincent college with a good Benedictine education, my first year of college and beer drinking was spent at what was Carnegie Tech and is now Carnegie Mellon University.

Henry Clay Frick, of whom you will hear more tonight was born in Connellsville, about 10 miles from my hometown and I lived across the river from coke ovens that were once part of the Frick empire.

And finally, the pivotal event of the strike, the confrontation with the Pinkerton's occurred on July 6, 1892. My father was born exactly two years later on July 6, 1894 about 10 miles from Homestead.

This truly has been a good experience for me. I learned more about the strike, Andrew Carnegie and Henry Frick, labor relations in the steel industry at this time, and yes, even my roots, than I would have ever known -- thank you for that incentive and opportunity.

As you may guess, were Carnegie and Frick on trial for their actions during the strike, the defense team would most likely not accept me as an objective, impartial juror.

In doing this paper, the most difficult task has been to distill the information down to an acceptable length. My first draft ran on for about two hours which would have been long even for me. I needed to eliminate much material that I found very interesting so who knows, maybe in my next presentation, you may get the second chapter.

The most interesting aspects of the strike are the personalities of Carnegie and Frick, the strike itself, the assassination attempt on Frick and the effect this strike had on labor relations in the steel industry for the next forty years.

Andrew Carnegie was born on November 25, 1835 in Dunfermline Scotland, the son of William Carnegie, a skilled weaver and Margaret Morrison Carnegie, a strong and determined personality. Incidentally, the woman's college associated with Carnegie Mellon University is The Margaret Morrison college.

In 1848, the family immigrated to Pittsburgh where two of Mrs. Carnegie's sisters had immigrated to in 1840. The early years of Carnegie's life in Pittsburgh are most interesting and could easily be the subject another night. Briefly, he began his career as a telegrapher with the Pennsylvania railroad under Thomas Scott, a superintendent for the Western Pennsylvania District and with whom was to maintain a relationship throughout his career.

He quickly demonstrated his business acumen, foresight and willingness to take risk. His first major investment involved the Keystone Bridge Company which built the Eads bridge, the first bridge across the Mississippi in 1870. It also provided the beams and plates for the Brooklyn Bridge, and the iron and steel for ten bridges across the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, 23 across the Ohio and 13 across the Mississippi.

He soon concentrated his total resources in the steel industry and in 1877 built the most modern steel mill in the U.S. This mill utilized the Bessemer process developed in England. He built this on the site of the Battle of Braddock's field in the French and Indian War and, in his oft-demonstrated strategy to curry favor with important people, named it the J. Edgar Thompson works for the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The mill was successful beyond his fondest dreams and when he saw the financial results after only 6 months, he uttered his rather famous statement, "where is there such a business".

In 1881, Carnegie acquired majority interest in the vast coal and coke holding of Henry C. Frick. This assured him a supply of coke, a necessary ingredient to make steel. It also began the partnership of two men who were as different as night and day, who together built an empire and yet probably only tolerated each other and ended their relationship on a bitter note.

Like Carnegie, Frick was also a self-made man. His maternal grandfather, Abraham Overholt was a wealthy farmer and distiller in western Pennsylvania. His grandfather did not approve of his daughters marriage to Frick's father, a man of very simple means and ambitions, and all he would do for Frick's parents was to allow them to live in a small springhouse on his large farm.

At a very early age Frick determined he was going to be wealthy. He also proved to be a very hard-working, hard-nosed, shrewd business man who with the financial support of Andrew Mellon, amassed vast holdings of coke ovens, coal resources and land in western Pennsylvania and was a millionaire by the age of thirty.

One big difference between Carnegie and Frick was their stated attitude toward the workingman and unions. From an early age, Andrew Carnegie espoused a very liberal and enlightened attitude toward the workingman, the accumulation of wealth and the social responsibilities associated with wealth. In a 1886 magazine article, he declared "The right of working men to combine and to form trade unions is no less sacred than the right of manufacturers to enter into associations with his fellows .... my experience has been that trade unions on the whole are beneficial both to labor and capital."

In a later article in the same journal, he stated: "It is not asking too much of men entrusted with the management of great properties that they should devote some part of their attention to searching out the causes of dissatisfaction among their employees and where they do exist that they should meet the men more than halfway in the endeavor to allay them. I would have the public give due consideration to the terrible temptation to which the workingman on strike is sometimes subjected. To expect that one dependent on his daily wage for the necessaries of life will stand peaceably by and see a new man employed in his stead is to expect much. In all but a few departments of labor it is unnecessary and I think improper to subject men to such an ordeal. The employer of labor will find it much more to his interest, wherever possible, to allow his works to remain idle and await the result of a dispute than to employ a class of men that can be induced to take the place of other men who have stopped work. Neither the best men as men, nor the best men as workers are thus to be obtained. There is an unwritten law among the best workmen, "Thou shalt not take thy neighbors job."

On the other hand, Frick was an acknowledged fierce opponent of unions and fought them throughout his career. In 1884, he used Pinkertons to protect Hungarian and Slavs who he brought in as strikebreakers to the coalfields. In 1891 he used them to protect the Italians he had brought in as strikebreakers against the Hungarians and Slavs. He also used Pinkertons and strikebreakers in a major strike in the Connellsville coal and coke district in 1887. Frick's only complaint against the system was that, no matter how ignorant and illiterate the recent immigrants brought in to break a strike might be, they learned only too quickly to ask for more. Then it became necessary to search for a new ethnic group who would not be able to communicate with those who were on strike.

On July 1, 1892 the Carnegie Steel Company came into being. Through the combined efforts and resources of Carnegie and Frick, they had created the largest steel company in the world, capable of producing steel equal in amount to over half of the total production of steel in all of Great Britain.

Carnegie and Frick were proud of their creation, but unhappily, they had selected a quite ironic birth date for their new giant. For on that morning all was not well within this vast empire that lay sprawled out from 33rd street in Pittsburgh down along the Monongahela to Duquesne some fifteen miles to the south. The flagship plant at Homestead, which had been converted into America's largest open hearth steel mill, lay paralyzed by a strike and lockout, a paralysis that threatened to spread to other plants.

It had been persistent labor difficulties at Homestead in the early 1880's that had enabled Carnegie to purchase, at cost, this impressive and dangerous new rival, only a mile down the river from Braddock. The Homestead plant, which had been built three years before Carnegie acquired it on what had once been a prosperous farm called, ironically, the Amity Homestead, had the most modern and efficiently designed rail and beam rolling mills in the country. Carnegie was as pleased to acquire its remarkably well-designed facilities as he was to eliminate it as a rival to Edgar Thomson.

Unhappily for Carnegie, along with the purchase of Homestead's Bessemer converters and rolling mills came six highly organized and well-disciplined labor lodges of the powerful Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers. Despite his public statements to the contrary, Carnegie was in the process of eliminating the Association from his plant at Braddock at the very moment he was buying Homestead and did not regard the acquisition of this labor organization as an asset.

He was well acquainted with the Association and its effectiveness in organizing the most highly skilled workers within the iron and steel industry, for there had long been lodges of the Association within the company's Union Iron Mills at Pittsburgh as well as at Edgar Thomson. The Amalgamated Association had been formed in 1876 by the merger of the three existing craft unions within the trade.

At the time of its formation, the Association had only 3000 members, but within fifteen years it had increased its membership eightfold and had become one of the most powerful craft unions within the country. Like the railroad brotherhoods, it remained fiercely elitist in its philosophy, refusing to consider the non-skilled and semi-skilled workers for membership and resolutely opposing the efforts of the Knights of Labor to organize all iron and steel workers into one large industrial union. During the relatively prosperous years of the 1880's within the trade, the Association had had remarkably strong national leadership and had entrenched itself into the most important steel mills in the country, including those in the Pittsburgh, Youngstown, and Chicago-Joliet areas.

Following the successful strike at Homestead in 1889 where they had most of their demands satisfied and became the sole bargaining agent for all employees, the Association had emerged more powerful than ever before. Although it admitted only some 800 of the 3800 workers at Homestead, it could count on the loyalty and support of all the employees in any future labor disputes at the time of the settlement. To the disgruntled Frick, who, as chairman of the other company, Carnegie Brothers, had had no voice in the management of Homestead, it appeared that William Abbott, Chairman of the Board, had in effect turned the management of the company over to the labor union.

Technological improvements at Edgar Thomson in 1885 had so depleted the membership of the lodges that Carnegie Brothers succeeded in removing the union from the plant. When Frick took over full authority of all plants within the Carnegie empire in 1892, he was determined that there would be no repetition of Abbott's soft-headed mismanagement when the contract with the Association at Homestead came up for re-negotiation in the spring of that year.

The Association, having won out over management in the showdown with Abbott in the summer of 1889, looked forward with confidence to a similar success when the contract expired on June 30, 1892.

It had little reason for that confidence. During those three years much had happened that would place the Association in a far more vulnerable position than it had been in 1889. First, and of primary importance, the lodges were dealing with Frick, quite a different man than they had faced across the bargaining table three years before. In their over-confidence, they actually welcomed this challenge knowing Frick to be the toughest anti-labor man in the industry. The Association felt that if it could successfully bargain with him, it could meet any other challenge throughout the iron and steel industry. This proved to be quite a miscalculation. Indeed, all other steel companies were looking toward Homestead in that spring of 1892, as they had in 1889, knowing that they would be affected by the outcome of the confrontation of labor and management there. An official of Jones & Laughlin had spoken for the whole industry when he said, "This company will make no terms with its men until there is a settlement at Homestead."

Frick had more than his iron will and grim determination to back his position, however. The 1889 strike had occurred at a moment when prices on steel rails and beams were high, and the company was behind in meeting its orders. The situation in 1892 was quite the opposite. With over-expansion of facilities and technological improvements, production had increased even faster than demand. Carnegie announced in April 1892 in the trade journal *Engineering and Mining Journal* that "The making of pig iron has developed faster than the demand for it, resulting in large stocks in hand and low prices . . . There must be a check on production . . . or prices will go lower yet". The company, with the market in this condition, had no great fear of a prolonged work stoppage and, indeed, saw this as a most opportune time for a decisive confrontation with the union.

The Association, moreover, had been even further weakened during the preceding three years by technological advancements within the industry. Because the Association admitted only the highly skilled workers, it was particularly vulnerable to the introduction of new machinery which reduced the number of skilled workers needed in any particular process of steelmaking. This also increased the potential for the use of unskilled strikebreakers to keep the plant running.

Finally, the rapid increase in the urban population during these years, caused by the expansion of immigration from central and southern Europe and the depressed farm conditions in America that brought an ever-increasing number of farm boys into the cities, meant that there was no shortage of labor available to industry in 1892. Hungry men were no more scrupulous in their observation of Carnegie's eleventh commandment, "Thou shalt not take thy neighbor's job," than the management.

While there may have been some disagreement as to tactics, it is apparent that both Carnegie and Frick agreed that this was the proper time to end the Association's power at Homestead. Carnegie preferred to meet the issue head-on. On April 4, 1892 he prepared a notice which he asked Frick to post at the Homestead plant. It read in part:

> These Works having been consolidated with the Edgar Thomson and Duquesne and other mills, there has been forced upon this firm whether its Works are to be run "Union" or "Non-Union". As the vast majority of our employees are Non-union, the Firm has decided that the minority must give place to the majority. These works therefore will be necessarily Non-Union after the expiration of the present agreement.
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> This does not imply that the men will make lower wages. On the contrary, most of the men at Edgar Thomson and Duquesne Works, both Non-Union, have made and are making higher wages than those at Homestead which has hitherto been Union . . . A scale will be arranged which will compare favorably with that at the other works named; that is to say, the Firm intends that the men of Homestead shall make as much as the men at either Duquesne or Edgar Thomson. Owing to the great changes and improvements made in the Converting Works, Beam Mills, Open Hearth Furnaces, etc. . . the products of the works will be greatly increased, so that at the rates per ton paid at Braddock and Duquesne, the monthly earnings of the men may be greater than hitherto. While the number of men required will, of course, be reduced, the extensions at Duquesne and Edgar Thomson as well as at Homestead will, it is hoped, enable the firm to give profitable employment to such of its desirable employees as may temporarily be displaced . . .

> This action is not taken in any spirit of hostility to labor organizations, but every man will see that the firm cannot run Union and Non-Union. It must be one or the other.

Carnegie's tactics were clear: an open disavowal of the union at all plants with the Carnegie companies; a continuation of the sliding scale of wages, as established at Homestead in 1889; and the reduction of existing tonnage rates for those few skilled employees who were paid by tonnage production rather than by hourly rates. If the workmen refused to accept this policy decision, then Carnegie's private instructions to Frick were to close the plant and to wait the men out.

Carnegie's decision that the works within his company could no longer continue part union, part non-union, and that since "the vast majority of our employees are non-union, the minority must give place to the majority," seemed to be in flat contradiction to his warm acceptance of unionization in his *Forum* articles. It is hard to reconcile this proposed notice with his flat, unequivocal statement, written only six years before: . . . "My experience has been that trade-unions upon the whole are beneficial both to labor and capital."

While it is difficult to reconcile Carnegie's actions with his image of an egalitarian democrat and union supporter, one explanation is that, in spite of his praise for William Weihe and the Amalgamated Association, the kind of unionism that Carnegie really approved of was company unionism, not national trade unions. In his first essay, Carnegie made this clear, when he wrote that one of the next steps that should be taken "in the advance toward permanent, peaceful relations between capital and labor" is "a proper organization of the men of every works. . . by which the natural leaders, the best men, will eventually come to the front and confer freely with the employers." By this statement, he defined the "proper" organization of labor as that formed by the men within each plant, not by a national organization. With company unionism, Carnegie had no quarrel. Unfortunately, organized labor did. If labor would not buy the company union, then Carnegie felt the only alternative was non-unionization, with the employer dealing with each employee on an individual basis.

Frick, in preparing for the battle with the Amalgamated Association, was in an enviable position compared with Carnegie. His attitude toward unions and labor relations were not very complicated. He had written no embarrassing *Forum* articles on the rights of labor to which his detractors could point and cry "Hypocrite!" In attacking the union at Homestead, he was remaining true to his reputation and to his principles. Yet, curiously enough, Frick rejected Carnegie's notice and advised against posting it for the employees to read. Although he agreed entirely with Carnegie's position that unionism would eventually have to be eliminated from all branches of the Carnegie Steel Company, he was not prepared to take on the union everywhere it existed at the same moment. He was also more realistic than Carnegie in anticipating that there could be serious trouble at Homestead over the refusal to grant a new contract to the local lodges of the Association, and from the first he sought to place the onus for any trouble that might ensue on labor, not management.

Although not sensitive to general public opinion, Frick was very much aware that the confrontation would take place in the summer of a presidential election year. He did not wish to make Homestead into a campaign issue for the Democrats, who were already making alarming noises about protective tariff, monopoly, and a growing plutocracy.

Consequently, rather than Carnegie's flat announcement that unionism was to end within the Carnegie employ, he proposed instead that the company offer to the lodges terms for the renewal of the contract so severe as to make acceptance by the union impossible, and then hold to these terms no matter what action labor might take.

Carnegie was at Coworth Park, in Sunningdale, England, and had conferred with Henry Phipps and George Lauder, who had come over to England with the latest instruction from Frick. Upon further reflection about his own position and reputation, he changed his mind as to tactics.

He wrote to Frick:

> You remember I wrote you a type-written slip, which I suggested you might have to use . . . But I hope you will make this change in it: I did not get it quite right, because I think it said that the firm had to make the decision of "Union" or "Non-Union." This I am sure, is wrong. We need not make that point, and we should not.
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> We simply say that consolidation having taken place, we must introduce the same system in our works; we do not care whether a man belongs to as many Unions or organizations as he chooses, but he must conform to the system in our other works . . .
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> One thing we are all sure of: No contest will be entered in that will fail. It will be harder this time at Homestead than it would have been last time when we had the matter in our own hands, as you have always felt. On the other hand, your reputation will shorten it, so that I really do not believe it will be much of a struggle. We all approve of anything you do, not stopping short of approval of a contest. We are with you to the end."

Indeed, so secretive had Carnegie been about his summer plans, and so remote was his retreat, that when Homestead broke into open warfare, reporters on both sides of the Atlantic, trying to find him for comment, would accuse Carnegie of deliberately hiding out in anticipation of the trouble that was coming. The truth is this arrangement was more at his partners' insistence than it was Carnegie's. The last thing in the world that Frick and Phipps wanted, aside from having Carnegie directly on the scene, was to have him easily available to the press. Knowing Carnegie's impetuosity and his great proclivity to talk more than he should, Frick and Phipps were obsessed with the desire to keep Carnegie out of sight -- and out of sound.

Carnegie himself did not anticipate any great trouble. He wrote to Frick in June, "Of course you will win, and win easier than you suppose, owing to the present condition of the market." Frick, however, prepared for the worst. In late spring, the workmen at Homestead were startled to see a stout stockade of planks, pierced with holes suitable for rifle barrels and topped with barbed wire, erected around the entire plant and running down to the river bank on each side of the piers where barges came for deliveries. In Frick's words, it was built "for the purpose of putting the property in a position that it could be defended against an assault."

Frick had also entered into negotiations with the Pinkerton Detective Agency, asking for 300 guards for his property sometime during the first week in July. Further details would be forthcoming at a later date. Frick had made use of this agency on three earlier occasions during labor trouble in the coal fields.

The Pinkerton National Detective Agency, which provided guard service to many employers of mass labor, had been founded by a young Scottish immigrant, Allan Pinkerton, in 1850, quite by accident, after he had successfully captured a counterfeiting band for the United States government. Pinkerton, whose name was to become the symbol of labor oppression in the late nineteenth century, had, curiously enough, a Radical background very similar to that of Carnegie. As a young man in Scotland he had been a Radical Chartist, and he had been forced to flee his native land to escape arrest. His detective agency received nationwide prominence in 1861, when Abraham Lincoln made use of its services for protection on his way to Washington for his first inaugural. In the frantic postwar years of business expansion and violent labor trouble, the agency increasingly moved into the more lucrative field of business protection.

The Pinkerton Agency was, in its own way, filling a need that had arisen as America changed from a nation of rural isolated communities into one of highly industrialized urban centers. Because the local governments were increasingly unable to enforce the laws, business began to look for its own private protection. It turned to the Pinkertons, who would provide any number of guards at $5 a head to furnish the protection business was desperately seeking.

To make themselves appear even more indispensable to their employers, the Pinkerton agents were not above acting as *agents provocateurs* to foment strife which only they could deal with.

No labor union meeting could ever be certain that it did not have in its midst a Pinkerton spy, ready to report its real plans to management and equally ready to report false plans to the press. Naturally, labor everywhere hated and feared the name Pinkerton as the devil incarnate. At the same moment that Frick was laying his secret plans to bring 300 Pinkerton guards to Homestead, the Populists, meeting in Omaha, were including in their platform a plant denouncing the existence "of a large standing army of mercenaries, known as the Pinkerton system, as a menace to our liberties," and demanding its abolition.

Frick, early in the year, in anticipation of the termination of the union contract, had asked the representatives of the local lodges to submit their contract proposals. The members of the Association submitted the contract in early March. Labor's proposals were simply to renew the 1889 contract. They asked for the same tonnage rate for those union men who were paid on a tonnage rather than an hourly basis. For those who were paid on a sliding scale, based upon the market price of steel billets, they asked that the minimum rate, below which hourly wages would not be reduced, be kept at $25 a ton, as it had been in the 1889 contract. That is, if the price of steel billets went above $25, hourly wages would rise accordingly, but if the price fell below $25, wages would not be cut. In 1889, when the contract had been negotiated with Abbott, the market price for billets was $27 a ton, and $25 seemed a fair minimum. But in 1892, with a depressed market condition, billets had fallen to $24 and promised to go even lower. The union, however, proposed $25, believing that this was a point upon which there could be reasonable and adjustable negotiations with management. Finally, the lodges asked that the new contract again be for a three-year period, to terminate on June 30, 1895.

In spite of the general market within the trade, the Amalgamated Association at first felt fairly confident that its demands, except for some adjustment on the minimum price for the sliding scale, would be met by management. The men were prepared to strike if a reasonable settlement could not be reached by June 30. They were also assured of the backing of the some 3000 employees in the plant who were non-union.

The Association's confidence in success was based upon several factors; their perceived pressure on the company to produce the armor plate to fill a government contract, their belief that they had an assurance from Carnegie that he would not use strikebreakers in the event that a strike should be necessary, and management's reluctance to have serious labor trouble in an election year.

Having taken the necessary steps to prepare for the contingency of work stoppage at Homestead, Frick then summarily rejected the lodges' proposals for a new contract and in return submitted his own. His proposals, of course, were totally unacceptable to the Association. The major points were these: first, the minimum price on steel billets below which the sliding scale would not go would be $22, not $25; second, the termination date for the new contract would be December 31, 1894, and third, the tonnage rate would be cut 15 per cent to allow management to take advantage of the increased production resulting from the new machinery.

The Association believed that "it was simply a proposition made by management that they knew we would not accept." And even one Pittsburgh newspaper editorialized, "It was not so much a question of disagreement as to wages, but a design upon labor organizations." Frick seemed to be maneuvering the union into either a strike or an abject surrender of all its recent gains. Either way, he stood to win.

Sensing the trap, the Association sought to avoid a showdown by keeping negotiations open. William T. Roberts of the workers' committee told the company that labor was willing to make reductions in the minimum for the sliding scale as well as for the tonnage rates if management could show that it was necessary. "We want to settle it without trouble. We don't want a strike."

But Frick was firm. On May 30 he sent his ultimatum to the men in the form of a letter to John Potter, Superintendent of the Homestead Plant:

> Referring to my visit to the works this morning, I now hand you herewith Homestead Steel Works wage scales for the open hearth plants, and No. 32 and 119 inch mills, which you will please present immediately to the joint committee, with the request that its decision be given thereon not later than June 24th.
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> These scales have had most careful consideration with a desire to act toward our employees in the most liberal manner. . . You can say to the committee that these scales are in all respects the most liberal that can be offered. We do not care whether a man belongs to a union or not, nor do we wish to interfere. He may belong to as many unions or organizations as he chooses, but we think our employees at Homestead Steel Works would fare much better working under the system in vogue at Edgar Thomson and Duquesne.

Frick was strongly supported in these maneuvers by Carnegie, who wrote to him in June: "As I understand matters at Homestead, it is not only the wages paid, but the number of men required by Amalgamated rules which make our labor rate so much higher than those in the East. Of course you will be asked to confer, and I know you will decline all conferences, as you have taken your stand and have nothing more to say. It is fortunate that only part of the Works are concerned. Provided you have plenty of plates rolled, I suppose you can keep on with armor." And, again, later that month, he wrote: "Cables do not seem favorable to a settlement at Homestead. If those be correct, this is your chance to reorganize the whole affair, and someone over Potter should exact good reasons for employing every man. Far too many men required by Amalgamated rules."

There appears to be much misinformation regarding salary scales at the Homestead plant. For years there had circulated throughout the trade wild stories of workers in the Carnegie plant who made $25 a day and were driven to work in their own carriages by servants. These stories, which were in no way discouraged by the company, were less than accurate. At the time of the strike, according to Frick's testimony at a subsequent congressional inquiry, four men at Homestead received from $10 to $12.65 a day; twelve from $8 to $10; thirty from $6 to $8; eighty-two from $4 to $6; 443 from $2 to $4; and 335 men received under $2 a day. These were only the skilled men, who came under union contract, but even these figures were inflated, for they were based on the May wage and tonnage scales, when production had been abnormally high as the company feverishly attempted to stockpile armor plates. The actual averages over the preceding year were considerably lower; the top four men at Homestead received $7.60 as a daily average; and the next twenty-three highest received from $5.40 to $7.04. Of the 3800 employees at Homestead, only 113 had an average of from $4 to $7.60; 1177 had an average of from $1.68 to $2.50; and 1625 had an average of $1.40 a day or less.

The workers committee took its proposals to the annual meeting of the Association in early June and received support from the national organization but President Weihe, however, urged further negotiation. Frick informed them that they had had his first and only offer, but he reluctantly agreed to a conference on June 23, one day before his ultimatum would expire.

At that meeting, each side repeated its proposals, but only on the question of the minimum for determining scales did there seem to be any indication from either management or labor that it would yield. The workers said that they would consider a new minimum of $24, inasmuch as steel billets were currently selling at $22.50. Frick said he would not yield even on this point, but after he had left the room, Potter told the committee that he thought he could get the company to agree on a $23 minimum instead of the $22 offered. On the other two points, tonnage rates and the terminal date for the next contract, neither side would yield.

Because management and labor had apparently come close to an agreement on the minimum to determine the sliding scale, many at the time and since felt the tragic strike may have been unnecessary. This view, however, discounts the other two points that divided labor and management.

To the workers in the plant, the terminal date for the contract was of crucial importance. To negotiate the next contract in mid-winter would mean that the union would be severely handicapped in calling a strike should negotiations break down. Men who are out of work in July can subsist much more easily and cheaply, with no fuel bills to pay, fewer clothes to wear, and their own garden produce to eat, than can men who are out of work in January. Frick knew this very well, and for this reason he had insisted upon December 31 terminal date. The conference broke up on this point and did not even discuss the tonnage rates.

The confrontation Frick had sought was at hand. The men returned from the conference still hoping that management would ask for another conference, and still expecting Carnegie at this point to intervene, as he had against Frick in the coal fields strike of 1887. But the deadline of June 24 passed and neither side moved. On June 28 the company began closing down departments and on July 1 the 3800 employees of Homestead, skilled and unskilled alike, walked out. The stage was set for war.

Frick had waited until the deadline for accepting his offer had passed and on June 25, he asked Robert Pinkerton for the 300 guards to arrive at Homestead on the early morning of 6 July. He told Pinkerton, "We think absolute secrecy essential in the movement of these men. As soon as your men are upon the premises, we will notify the Sheriff and ask that they be deputized either at once or immediately upon an outbreak of such a character as to render such a step desirable."

In the meantime, the men at Homestead were busy taking countermeasures. Knowing Frick's previous tactics, the advisory committee fully expected the company to attempt to bring Pinkerton guards and strikebreakers into the plant. The advisory committee, consisting of representatives from each of the lodges, assumed full command, and Hugh O'Donnell, a skilled roller, was elected chairman. There was full cooperation from the municipal government, and for that matter, from nearly the entire population of Homestead. The mayor of the town, John McLuckie, was one of the skilled workers at the plant and an ardent supporter of the strike. An elaborate alarm system was set up to warn all the inhabitants of the arrival of any of Frick's "visitors," and there were watchers posted on bridges in Pittsburgh and patrol boats sent out to cruise the Monongahela to give the word of any unusual movement up the river.

For four days the tension at Homestead built.

Not a wheel turned nor a furnace burned. Men congregated about the plant fence and peered through the loopholes at the company guards inside. *The New York Times* reported on July 1: "It is evident that there is no 'bluffing' at Homestead. The fight there is to be to the death between the Carnegie Steel Company, Limited, with its $25,000,000 capital, and the workmen."

On Sunday, July 3, Father John J. Bullion of Saint Mary Magdalene's Roman Catholic Church preached to his congregation, which included many mill workers: "Whatever the circumstances should be, you men should preserve order. To keep the peace should be your first endeavor. You must do so if you desire to retain public opinion on your side in this fight. You will lose nothing by remaining quiet . . . Disorder could result only in harm to you."

The Reverend John J. McIlyar of the Fourth Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church and obviously a forerunner of today's activist minister, delivered a more pointed sermon, entitled "The Master and the Man," He said the question was often asked, "Where would Homestead be without the mills?" Why not ask, he suggested, "Where would Andrew Carnegie be without the millions he has made from the mills?"

On the Fourth of July, about one thousand workers attended the town's traditional holiday picnic. The Homestead newspaper discounted stories in the Pittsburgh papers that Pinkertons could be effective strikebreakers.

On July 5 at the official request of the Carnegie company managers, William H. McCleary, the sheriff of Allegheny County, accompanied by a few deputies, appeared at Homestead to provide protection for the property. The advisory committee politely conducted the law officers around the high wall of the plant and informed them that not a living creature could make a move toward the plant without being observed and stopped. No property in the country, including the government mint, was as well protected as Homestead. The committee in all seriousness asked Sheriff McCleary to deputize their guards as official law officers. Bewildered by this unexpected request, the sheriff hurried back to Pittsburgh, and his deputies were politely but firmly escorted out of the plant by the advisory committee.

Frick, having failed to get protection from the law officers of the county, was assured by his legal counsel that he was now acting properly in brining his own private guards. He informed the sheriff that, on the early morning of 6 July, he was planning to send by river barge 300 Pinkerton guards into the Homestead plant. He asked the sheriff to send a deputy sheriff with the guards with authority to deputize them should the need arise. The sheriff sent Colonel Joseph H. Gray, a deputy sheriff, to Bellevue to join

Superintendent Potter and the 300 guards on the barges, but he explicitly denied Gray the authority to deputize the Pinkerton men.

On July 5, *The New York Times* conjectured, "The strike will be fought to the bitter end, and few who know Mr. Frick's methods and resources can hope that the end will be otherwise than the defeat of the workmen."

About 1:00 AM on Wednesday, July 6, pickets posted on the Smithfield Street Bridge at Pittsburgh made out in the darkness two large barges being pulled slowly up the river. Word was flashed to Homestead by telegraph or horseback or both. About 4:00 AM the steam whistle was sounded, and hundreds of Homestead workers and residents burst from their homes and rushed toward the Mill; other workers and union supporters hurried down to the bank on the north side of the Monongahela River. The Homesteaders -- men, women, children -- carried whatever weapons they could find -- rifles, shotguns, pistols, sticks, rocks, fence staves.

The barges were filled with three hundred Pinkertons.

Until the morning of July 6, no workers had trespassed on the company's property. Now hundreds of workers and townspeople stormed the works. Parts of the wooden fence that Frick had ordered built were pulled down, and the Homesteaders erected barricades and took up positions.

It had been planned that the Pinkertons would land secretly and occupy the mill, so that strikebreakers could be brought in. Now the workers were in the mill. If the Pinkertons were to occupy it, they would have to do it by force.

About 4:00 AM, as the sky was beginning to grow light, the two barges, the Monongahela and the Iron Mountain, were pulled to the landing site. A gangplank was thrown out, and a number of Pinkerton men, armed with Winchesters and pistols, started coming down the gangplank to shore. A shot was fired, then more.

No one can say who began the firing. There were guns everywhere -- the Pinkertons had them, as did the strikers in their assorted craft on the water and on both banks of the river. It does not matter; fire came from both sides. A number of Pinkertons were hit, and one, J. W. Kline, was mortally wounded. On shore, a number of Homesteaders were also struck down and carried from the field. The battle of Homestead, like no other confrontation in American history, was on.

Both sides took up positions, the Pinkertons inside the barges, the workers and townspeople behind breastworks of scrap iron and beams and plates or in mill buildings. At the advisory committee's headquarters, a hotel on Eighth Avenue, rifles and shotguns and ammunition were distributed. Soon more than five thousand people were at the site, fighters and observers alike, many of the latter sitting on the hill above the mill as though the melodrama was being staged for them. More armed men, workers and supporters, continued to gather by the Carrie Furnaces, on the north shore across the river from Homestead. The Pinkertons, some huddling and frightened, others firing from windows or holes they had knocked in the sides of the barges, were under fire from both sides of the Monongahela.

About 9:00 AM a great noise was heard -- artillery! Workers across the river had obtained a cannon, loaded it with steel scrap, aimed it at the barges, and touched the piece off. A shot struck one of the barges, tearing a hole in the roof, but that was the best cannon round of the day. It was this shot, wide and long, that struck the worker Silas Wain in the mill yard and blew off his head. He was the first worker to die on the field. Another cannon was obtained from the Homestead lodge of the Grand Army of the Republic, on Sixth Avenue, and put in place, but it was too high on the hill and the muzzle could not be sufficiently lowered to be targeted on the barges. The artillery pieces were abandoned.

The temperature rose, and soon the heat in the barges was unbearable. Just after 11:00 AM, the *Little Bill* steamed back toward the landing site, apparently in an effort to release the barges so that they could float downstream. The tug was flying the Stars and Stripes at low stern. "We determined to fight under the colors," Captain Rodgers of the Pinkertons said. He thought the workers would not fire on the American flag. But volley after volley struck the ship, smashing the glass in the pilot house and wounding the watchman. The captain saved himself by throwing himself to the deck. The *Little Bill*, pilotless, circled about, then drifted back out of range.

The workers attempted several stratagems to roust the Pinkertons. A raft was soaked with oil, fired, and sent drifting downriver toward the barges. But the flames were extinguished by the water. A railroad freight car, loaded with oil, timber and mill refuse, was set afire and run down onto a track near the barges. Flames rose high in the air, and the car was sent rolling down the track toward the barges. The car jumped the track and came to a stop in the dirt. No damage was done.

A number of sticks of dynamite were obtained -- dynamite is used in steel mills to blow out tap holes -- and distributed to a dozen or so workers. The men worked their way as close as they could to the barges, and hurled the sticks. Some sticks struck the barges but did little damage. Most fell wide of the mark.

The barges were also bombarded with skyrockets and Roman candles left over from Homestead's Fourth of July celebration. This had no effect, so the men obtained a town fire engine, pumped oil onto the water, and set it afire. The fire burned out with no damage.

The situation settled into a stalemate, although the workers had the upper hand because the Pinkertons were confined to their barges. Also, more armed workmen were arriving from Braddock and Pittsburgh.

At 3:00 PM, William Weihe, the Amalgamated Association's president, and other union leaders arrived in town. A meeting of strikers and sympathizers was hastily convened in a mill building. Weihe -- seven feet tall, called "The Giant Puddler" by the union men -- and the other leaders pleaded with the strikers to allow the Pinkertons to leave. The men refused. "Kill them," the strikers cried. "Burn them." But the union leaders were able to calm the strikers, and now Hugh O'Donnell grabbed a small American flag, mounted a barricade of iron, and begged the men to allow a truce. The men agreed -- providing that the Pinkertons, not the strikers, hoisted the first white flag.

O'Donnell and two other advisory committee members went down to the riverbank to negotiate with one of the Pinkerton detectives. If the Pinkertons surrendered, the union men said, they would not be harmed. The Pinkertons said that they would come out.

By now, thousands more people had arrived in Homestead and were milling about the streets or on the hill above the works. A motley gang it was, too -- millhands from other ironworks and steelworks along the Monongahela, toughs looking for fun, anarchists from Pittsburgh. Hundreds of women -- wives of workers and townspeople -- were also on the scene. It was 4:00 PM.

The fight had lasted twelve hours. The Pinkertons were weary and frightened. None wanted to be among the first to leave the barges. Then a few Pinkerton men hesitantly began to come out.

Workers and townspeople pressed in toward the battle site. As the Pinkertons, disarmed and under guard, began clambering up the bank, their wounded carried on litters, the strikers and onlookers formed two lines stretching some six hundred yards up from the barges. The route of the Pinkertons was between the lines. As the Pinkertons, hungry, thirsty, some wounded, all scared, were made to walk, many of them stumbling, they were mercilessly beaten by strikers and sympathizers --including many workers' wives -- armed with sticks, fence staves, umbrellas. Some women gathered stones in their aprons and stoned the Pinkertons. Children threw rocks and clods of mud. Many of the Pinkerton men had their blue uniforms torn from their bodies. A number were beaten to the ground.

A number of strikers, including Hugh O'Donnell and other members of the advisory committee, attempted to shield the Pinkerton men but had little success. It is said that some workers pointed their rifles at the Pinkertons' tormentors, saying they would shoot them --their fellow townspeople -- if they did not stop. Some workers were struck down in the melee.

With great difficulty, the guards herded the Pinkertons into town, to the Homestead opera house and the skating rink, on Sixth Avenue. The Pinkertons were forced inside and the mob surged forward. A dozen guards leveled their rifles at the townspeople. Burgess John McLuckie stepped forward and ordered the crowd to desist. Finally, they began to disperse.

The Pinkertons huddled in the opera house, under guard. It was about 5:00 PM. The Pinkertons, about half of them seriously injured, remained in the opera house through the evening. Members of the advisory committee met with the town's elected officials, and it was agreed to allow the Allegheny County sheriff to come to Homestead to pick up the Pinkertons. At about 11:00 PM, Sheriff McCleary arrived on a special train and the Pinkertons were herded aboard the train and taken to Pittsburgh and then to New York and Chicago.

The Homestead strike was not the most violent uprising in American labor history. Considering the ferocity of the battle, which raged for nearly twelve hours, the 10 casualties were surprisingly low, and only the two river barges that had brought the guards down to Homestead were destroyed. The plant itself was untouched, and it was in operation again within ten days. But Homestead has become a part of the American union man's legend in much the same way that Haymarket Square has served as a symbol of the anarchy and terrorism of labor organizations.

Unquestionably, Homestead has also been given an added significance because it took place within the Carnegie empire. There had been and would be many other bloody and tragic encounters between management and labor -- against

Frick in the coal fields of Westmoreland County, against George Pullman and his "model town" in Illinois. But the Fricks and the Pullmanns of American industry were the known enemies of organized labor. Neither quarter nor compassion had been expected in any struggle with them. But Carnegie had sung a different tune -- about the dignity of labor, the sanctity of a man's job, of profit-sharing and the Gospel of Wealth, and of democracy triumphant. A little song became very popular which included: "Where was Andy, the good little boss, on this dark day? Why he was over in Scotland, and far away." Had he known in advance of Frick's plans for Pinkerton guards and strikebreakers and state troopers? Most of Carnegie's older employees at Homestead could not believe it. If only Andy had been here, they told the others, things would have been different. But the younger workers at Homestead, and labor throughout the country, drew quite a different lesson from the situation. "You can't trust any of them," was the moral they drew from Homestead, "and it is better to confront a Frick with a hard heart than a Carnegie with a false tongue."

What, indeed, was Carnegie thinking in his remote Highland fastness when he got the news of the battle of Homestead? His first reaction was panic. He cabled Frick that he was returning, but the other owners feared that if he did, he would undermine Frick's hard line. They convinced Carnegie to remain where he was. Given the awful choice of losing face or losing Frick, Carnegie swallowed his pride and complied with his partners' request. There was no retreat now. But he was angry at Frick, first, for having ignored his repeated instruction that in case the men refused to accept the company offer, he was simply to close the plant and wait them out; and second, after deciding on a different course, for having bungled the job.

The strikers and the other residents of Homestead were confident that their losses had not been in vain. They believed they had acted in defense of their jobs and their town and that they would get their jobs at the mill back at fair terms.

On July 8, Sheriff McCleary returned to Homestead, but Homestead citizens, including businessmen, refused to be deputized, and the workers refused to surrender the mill to him. He took the train back to Pittsburgh. The situation -- watched throughout the nation and in Europe -- was unprecedented. The strikers held the Homestead Works and the town. The union men were guarding the mill but also ensuring that it could not be retaken. The fence around the mill had been repaired, and arms and ammunition had been distributed to pickets, who were posted to watch for company forces sent to recapture the mill. Even when the Amalgamated Association's attorney urged the strikers to allow the sheriff to take possession, the strikers refused.

There had been talk since the fight that Governor Robert E. Pattison would send in the Pennsylvania National Guard, the state militia. On July 8, a delegation from Homestead, including Hugh O'Donnell, journeyed to Harrisburg, the state capital, conferred with the governor for over an hour, and left with the conviction that the militia would not be mobilized. On the morning of Sunday, July 10, Sheriff McCleary informed the governor that he could not establish authority in Homestead: "The strikers are in control, and openly express to me and to the public their determination that the works shall not be operated unless by themselves." At 10:00 PM, the governor acted, ordering the mobilization of the eight-thousand man Pennsylvania militia and dispatching it, with arms and ammunition, to Homestead. Within twelve hours, it was on the march.

Monday, July 11, was a day of excitement. The townspeople knew that the militia was on its way, but they continued to believe that they had done nothing illegal. At 2:00 PM, strikers and townspeople met in the Homestead opera house and discussed the situation. The workers saw the militia as their friends and protectors. "We don't want Pinkertons here," Mayor McLuckie said, addressing the gathering. "We want the militia." A reception committee was designated to meet the soldiers, and it was decided that the town's four brass bands would be mustered to play for the troops. A discussion ensued over what selection should be played, and a decision was finally reached: the favorite, "Ta Ra Ra, Boom De Ay."

The town waited. But no soldiers appeared. Night fell, and after a time most townspeople went to bed. Then, at 8:45 AM, Tuesday, July 12, two trains pulled into the Munhall station, at the eastern end of Homestead. One train, with two cars, carried Major General George R. Snowden, commander of the Pennsylvania militia, and his staff, and Sheriff McCleary; the second, with ten cars, carried hundreds of troops, bayoneted rifles protruding from the windows. Behind came more trains carrying hundreds more troops.

The troops, seven regiments in all, seized the hill, known at the time as Shanty Hill, owned by the Carnegie company and today the site of the Free Carnegie Library of Homestead; artillery pieces were un-limbered and trained on the mill and town below. Gatling guns also were deployed. Within half an hour, four thousand troops were formed in line of battle, facing down on the town. Across the Monongahela River, Homesteaders saw another four thousand troops where artillery had been deployed.

On the morning of July 12, O'Donnell and a group of townspeople journeyed up the hill to meet with General Snowden, who had established his headquarters at the Carnegie schoolhouse. "We come as representing the citizens of Homestead as well as the Amalgamated strikers," O'Donnell said. "I am always glad to meet the citizens, the old citizens, of any community," the general said. "We have been peaceful and law-abiding citizens," O'Donnell said. "No, you have not," Snowden said. "You have not been peaceful and law-abiding citizens." O'Donnell spoke again. "General," he said, "We've got four brass bands, and we would like to have them and a parade of our friends pass in review before the camp." "I don't want any brass band business while I'm here," Snowden said. "I want you to distinctly understand that I am master of this situation." Homestead was occupied.

It was the purpose of the militia to prevent violence and to protect the property rights of the Carnegie company. This meant breaking the strike.

Troops garrisoned the mill yards and sentries were posed outside Frick's fence. The *Little Bill*, the tug that had towed the barges carrying the Pinkerton's, was chartered by the militia to haul supplies. This galled the workmen who saw the tugboat as a symbol of Frick and the Pinkertons and the effort to oppress them. Another tug brought over the workers most dreaded, strikebreakers, whom company recruiting agents were signing up in eastern and mid-western cities. Food and cots were brought into the Homestead Works, and within a week a hundred strikebreakers were quartered inside.

On July 15, three days after the troops' arrival, smoke rose from the works for the first time since the strike had begun. Workers gathered and rushed the works, but the soldiers held them back by leveling rifles with fixed bayonets at them. The troops accomplished their mission -- securing the Carnegie company's property for its owners.

On July 16, notices were posted in Homestead that applications for work would be accepted from old employees. The company, the notices said, intended to retain those workers who had not taken part in the disturbances; those workers who did not apply would be replaced. On July 19, seven days after the arrival of the militia, work resumed in the open hearth and the armor-plate mill.

In the meantime, there was an epilogue -- one more scene of violence acted out before the drama of Homestead could be complete. On Saturday afternoon, July 23, Frick was sitting in his office, talking with the vice president of the company, J.G.A. Leishman, when a pale, nervous young man, a recent immigrant from Lithuania by the name of Alexander Berkman, burst in and shot Frick twice with a small pistol at close range.

Berkman was a friend and disciple of Johann Most, the leader of the most radical wing of the American anarchists. Berkman lived in a commune in Worcester, Mass. with Emma Goldman who would become a well known author and recognized leader of the anarchist movement. In 1901 when Leon Czolgosz was arrested for the assassination of President McKinley he expressed admiration for Goldman and her writings. She was arrested in Chicago and questioned but ultimately found to have no connection to Czolgosz or the assassination.

To Berkman and Goldman, the violence at Homestead offered an opportunity to hasten the workers revolution and topple capitalism. This would be done using a basic strategy of radical anarchist doctrine -- the political assassination. This radical arm of the anachist movement believed that by assassinating a hated exploiter of the workers, they could demonstrate the self-sacrificing devotion of intellectuals and theorists to the cause of the people and thereby create a revolutionary temper among the lower classes.

As important as the act itself was the publicity that the trial and execution that must inevitably follow it would engender. This was the supreme sacrifice for the People.

The first bullet pierced the lobe of Frick's left ear, then entered his neck. The second lodged in the right side of his neck. Before Berkman could fire a third time, Leishman struck his arm and the shot went into the ceiling. Berkman managed to then stab Frick three times in the hip and legs. Then the office clerks rushed in and tried to subdue Berkman. A deputy sheriff arrived in the midst of this scuffle, and he raised his gun to shoot the would-be assassin. Frick, leaning against his desk, cried, "Don't shoot. Leave him to the law but raise his head and let me see his face." Frick then pointed to Berkman's jaw, which was moving as if he were chewing. The deputy forced the man's mouth open and found a capsule containing enough fulminate of mercury to blow the room to bits. This was too much for Leishman, who fainted dead away.

The indomitable Frick sat quietly in a chair and, without an anesthetic, allowed the surgeon to probe his neck and back, telling the doctor when he had reached the bullets. When the slugs were extricated and his profusely bleeding wounds staunched and dressed, Frick insisted upon returning to his desk. He wrote out a telegram to Carnegie saying, "Was shot twice but not dangerously. There is no necessity for you to come home. I am still in shape to fight the battle out."

The story of the attempted assassination of Frick made front-page news around the world. Berkman had no connection whatsoever with the labor union. But his attack upon Frick was inevitably associated in the public's mind with the strike at Homestead, and much of the popular sympathy that the strikers had enjoyed was lost. Although he had no previous connection to Homestead, Berkman became identified with working people and the Homestead strikers. Hugh O'Donnell, the strike's leader said, "It would seem the bullet from Berkman's pistol, failing its foul intent, went straight through the heart of The Homestead Strike."

The effect on public opinion would have perhaps been even greater if the Frick story had not been immediately followed by newspaper accounts of the overzealous commanding officer of the troops at Homestead, who hung a young private by his thumbs for over a half an hour until the boy lost consciousness. Private Iams's offense had been to shout, "Hooray for the anarchist," when he heard the news of the attack on Frick.

The union made one final attempt to enter into negotiations with the company. Hugh O'Donnell, under arrest on the charge of murdering Pinkerton guards, fled to New York and there hastened to the Republican headquarters, where he suspected there might be considerable concern over recent events at Homestead. He was quite right. Whitelaw Reid, editor and publisher of the New York Tribune, who had been recently nominated for the vice presidency at the Republican National Convention, was greatly alarmed over the impact that

Homestead would have, not only on the labor vote, but also in giving substance to the Democrats' charge that Big Business had become autocratic and bloated with wealth because of the protective tariff.

Reid was more than receptive to O'Donnell's plea that an effort be made to communicate to Carnegie the concessions that labor was willing to make in order to reopen negotiations. Reid suggested that O'Donnell write a letter to him (Reid) as if O'Donnell were still in Homestead. Reid would then transmit this letter by cable to Carnegie along with his own message supporting the workers' proposals. So O'Donnell, in Reid's office wrote this letter:

> Honorable Whitelaw Reid,
>
> Dear Sir:
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> I address you in behalf of the 12,000 inhabitants of Homestead, Pennsylvania. In their name, I ask that you interest yourself in the unfortunate controversy still pending between them and the Carnegie Steel Company by whom the majority of the adult population of the town is employed. In presenting this matter to you I have no desire to dwell upon the merits or demerits of the conflict. I am looking toward the future, not the past . . . I simply therefore lay before you the situation as it exists today . . . It is in the interest of no one that this state of affairs should continue; that it should not, there is but one, and only one, course to pursue . . .
>
> But before submitting my proposition permit me to say a word in reference to the course of procedure which appears to be in the minds of the Carnegie Company. I mean their express determination to put non-union men at work in the place of our people by the aid of the State authorities. . . This will only intensify the internecine strife at Homestead -- most of the union men own their own homes, and they will not give them up without a fight. (A virtual paraphrase of Carnegie's *Forum* article.)
>
> . . . But further trouble can be prevented. How shall it be done? Simply let the Carnegie Company recognize the Amalgamated Association by re-opening the conference doors, and I have no hesitation in saying that there is no disposition on the part of the employees to stand upon a question of scale or wages, or hours, or anything else. The spirit that dominates them is conciliatory in the extreme, for they deplore the recent sad occurrence as much as any other class of people in the whole country . . . That it is true is sufficiently clear to my mind to cause me to ask you to do what you can in every honorable way to bring about an amicable settlement.

Having written his letter to Reid and indicating that the Association would reconsider its position on every issue, including the terminal date for the contract, O'Donnell hurried back to Pittsburgh to surrender himself to the sheriff. Reid had at this moment very tender feelings about putting personal welfare above party welfare, for he had just agreed, for obvious political reasons, to allow the Typographers Union to establish a local in the Tribune office for the first time.

He was eager to send O'Donnell's message to Carnegie, but Frick refused to give Reid Carnegie's address. Finally, in desperation, Reid sent the message to Carnegie in care of the American Counsel General in London along with his own message urging Carnegie "to weigh it most carefully before deciding, for so small a reason as the objection to continued recognition of their organization, which you have heretofore recognized, to prolong this distressing and bloody strife which may spread so widely," Reid told Carnegie that O'Donnell "assures me that if your people will merely consent to reopen a conference with their representatives, thus recognizing their organization they will waive every other thing in the dispute, and submit to whatever you think it right to require, whether as to scale or wages or hours or anything else."

Reid, who had received word that Carnegie had accepted the proposal but wanted Frick to be consulted, hurriedly sent his representative for the Republican National Committee, John E. Milholland, to Pittsburgh on July 30 to talk with Frick. Word of Carnegie's acceptance was not true and Milholland found Frick at home recuperating from his wounds and most definitely not in a conciliatory mood. Both Frick and Carnegie felt they were in a very strong position to accomplish their goal and they were not about to compromise. In the account he sent to Reid, Milholland reported Frick's response:

> Mr. Frick declared emphatically that he would never consent to settle the difficulties if President Harrison himself should personally request him to do so. Notwithstanding the fact that he was a Republican and a warm friend and admirer of the President, the whole Cabinet, the whole leadership of the party might demand it but he would not yield. He was going to fight the strike out on the lines that he had laid down. I remarked, "If it takes all summer?" "Yes," he said, "if it takes all summer and all winter, and all next summer and all next winter. Yes, even my life itself. I will fight this thing to the bitter end. I will never recognize the Union, never, never! . . . It makes no difference to me what Mr. Carnegie has said to (Consul) General New or to anybody else. I won't settle this strike even if he should order me peremptorily to do so. If he interferes every manager that he has will resign and of course I will get out of the concern. But I do not think he will interfere."

The Republicans, to be sure, lost the election, and Harrison and Reid forever after blamed Homestead and Carnegie and Frick's unwillingness to compromise for their defeat. They pointed to the effective use of the strike by the Democratic press, particularly Joseph Pulitzer's St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Carter Harrison's Chicago Times. President Harrison said that he was defeated by "the discontent and passion of the workingmen growing out of wages or other labor disturbances." Chauncey Depew, the toastmaster-general of the G.O.P., put it more bluntly, "As a matter of fact the Homestead strike was one of the most important factors in the presidential contest . . . It happened at a crisis and injured us irremediably."

Carnegie and Frick thus served as useful scapegoats for the Republican party. Many historians have since acknowledged the strike as a major contributory factor. Unquestionably, Homestead did cost the Republicans some votes, but it is highly doubtful that this tragic event was decisive in determining the outcome. Cleveland, who actually had received a larger popular vote than Harrison in 1888 but had lost the election in the Electoral College, was not to be denied a second term in 1892. The congressional elections of 1890, which had gone heavily Democratic, showed the growing dissatisfaction of the people. The unprecedented victory of a Democratic presidential candidate in Illinois and Wisconsin was the result of growing farm unrest as well as a switch in the city vote in Chicago and Milwaukee. It is significant to note that Pennsylvania, which should have been most affected by Homestead, remained in the Republican column; Cleveland actually received fewer votes in Philadelphia in 1892 than he had in 1888. There was one city, however, in which Homestead did have a decisive effect, and that was in Homestead itself. Homestead had always voted two-to-one Republican, but in 1892 the beleaguer town voted Democratic by the same wide margin. It was the only way left for the strikers to register a last protest against their former bosses.

Carnegie and Frick, however, felt neither the guilt nor concern than might have been expected from such staunch Republicans. Frick wrote Carnegie immediately after the election, "I am very sorry for President Harrison but I cannot see that our interests are going to be affected one way or the other by the change in administration." On the same day, Carnegie was writing to Frick, "Cleveland! Landslide! Well we have nothing to fear and perhaps it is best. People will now think the Protected Manufacturer's will be attended to and quit agitating. Cleveland is pretty good fellow. Off for Venice tomorrow."

A major reason for Frick's and Carnegie's sanguine outlook at this time was that the Homestead strike was at last coming to an end. On November 18th, Frick sent a single word cablegram to Carnegie, "Victory!" and three days later, a longer message reading, "Strike officially declared off yesterday. Our victory is now complete and most gratifying. Do not think we will ever have any serious labor trouble again, and should now soon have Homestead and all the works formerly managed by Carnegie, Phipps & Company, in as good shape as Edgar Thomson and Duquesne. Let the Amalgamated still exist and hold full sway at other people's mills. That is no concern of ours." Carnegie, from Italy, responded, "Life is worth living again --Cables received -- first happy morning since July -- surprising how pretty Italia --congratulate all around -- improve works -- go ahead -- clear track -- tariff not in it -- shake."

As for Carnegie, he would later write, "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." Carnegie had reason to feel pangs of pain, for the wounds

inflicted upon him by press, pulpit, and political platform were deep and came from all directions --right, left and center.

In Britain the cry raised against him was both bitter and taunting. Every major newspaper carried full front-page accounts on the events at Homestead, and most of them editorialized at length on Carnegie's deficiencies as an employer and a man.

Carnegie received no kinder treatment from the American press; the New York World, the Chicago Times, even the Pittsburgh papers. The cruelest editorial of all appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. It was reprinted widely throughout the country.

> Count no man happy until he is dead. Three months ago Andrew Carnegie was a man to be envied. Today he is an object of mingled pity and contempt. In the estimation of nine-tenths of the thinking people on both sides of the ocean he had not only given the lie to all his antecedents, but confessed himself a moral coward. One would naturally suppose that if he had a grain of consistency, not to say decency, in his composition, he would favor rather than oppose the organization of trades-unions among his own working people at Homestead. One would naturally suppose that if he had a grain of manhood, not to say courage, in his composition, he would at least have been willing to face the consequences of his inconsistency.
>
> But what does Carnegie do? Runs off to Scotland out of harm's way to await the issue of the battle he was too pusillanimous to share. A single word from him might have saved the bloodshed -- but the word was never spoken. Nor has he, from that bloody day until this, said anything except that he had "implicit confidence in the managers of the mills." The correspondent who finally obtained this valuable information, expresses the opinion that "Mr. Carnegie has no intention of returning to American at present." He might have added that America can well spare Mr. Carnegie. Ten thousand "Carnegie Public Libraries" would not compensate the country for the direct and indirect evils resulting from the Homestead lockout. Say what you will of Frick, he is a brave man. Say what you will of Carnegie, he is a coward. And gods and men hate cowards.

In January 1893 Carnegie returned to New York and at once hurried off to Pittsburgh. He insisted upon visiting Homestead, and there, before the collected workers, new and old, he read a prepared speech:

> I have not come to Pittsburgh to rake up, but to bury the past. It should be banished as a horrid dream, but the lessons it teaches should be laid to heart for future application. For twenty-six years our concerns have met with only one labor stop-page. I trust and believe that this record will be equalled in the next twenty-five years. When employer and employed become antagonistic, their antagonism can only be described as a contest between twin brothers. No genuine victory is possible for either side, only the defeat of both . . . I made my first dollar in Pittsburgh and expect to make my last dollar here also. I do not know any form of philanthropy so beneficial as this; there is no charity in it. I have hoarded nothing, and shall not die rich apart from my interest in the business. Unless the Pittsburgh Works are prosperous, I shall have nothing. I have put all my eggs in one basket right here, and I have the satisfaction of knowing that the first charge upon every dollar of my capital is the payment of the highest earnings paid for labor in any part of the world for similar services. Upon that record I could stand.

He concluded by praising Frick:

> I am not mistaken in the man, as the future will show. Of his ability, fairness and pluck no one has the slightest question. His four years' management stamps him as one of the foremost managers of the world -- I would not exchange him for any manager I know . . . . His are the qualities that wear; he never disappoints; what he promises he more than fulfills.
>
> I hope after this statement that the public will understand that the officials of the Carnegie Steel Company, Limited, with Mr. Frick at their head, are not dependent upon me, or upon anyone in any way for their positions, and that I have neither power nor disposition to interfere with them in the management of the business. And further, that I have the most implicit faith in them.

It took courage for Carnegie to come to Homestead to make his first and only formal public statement regarding the strike. Considering the circumstances, the reception he received was good. He had said all the right things with the proper note of conviction, and at least Frick and the other company mangers were satisfied. For them. Homestead could now be considered a closed book. Both they and the workers knew that Carnegie had been wrong when he said that no victory was possible for either side, but it was to be expected that he should say that.

Carnegie also knew that his strong endorsement of Frick and his management of the affair was what he should say, and he said it forcibly and well. But he felt something quite different and the rancor Carnegie felt over Frick's management of the Homestead confrontation would fester and erupt. It would contribute to the open break between them.

Perhaps Carnegie had been right, after all, in saying "no genuine victory is possible for either side." Certainly it had proved no genuine triumph for him. His own role, his actions, and his lack of action had been so ambiguous and contradictory that they cast doubt on the sincerity of anything he later said or did. An impartial judge would recognize Carnegie's genuine sincerity on two points. First, he was sincere in not wanting to use force by bringing in strikebreakers. He had given explicit instructions to Frick upon that point, and he was genuinely horrified when he heard that deaths had resulted because his instructions had been disobeyed.

Second, he was sincere in his desire to break the union at Homestead. He had proposed an open confrontation with the Association on this issue, and he fully backed Frick in achieving that goal. That these two positions came into open conflict with each other was largely due to Frick, not to him. Had Carnegie been at Homestead, as he had been at Braddock in the winter of 1887-88, it is quite possible that rioting and bloodshed would have been avoided. Carnegie might have simply closed the plant and waited the men out. But the union would have been broken, in any event. So for Carnegie, Homestead brought both pain and gain. He wrote soon after his visit to Homestead: "I went to Homestead & shook hands with the old men, tears in their eyes and mine. Oh, that Homestead blunder -- but it's fading as all events do and we are at work selling steel one pound for a half penny. With that letter, Carnegie accurately summed up the credit and debit sides of the ledger on Homestead as it affected him.

The American trade union movement in general, however, could find very little in the Homestead ledger that was a gain for them. It is true that there was a wider sympathy for labor throughout the country as a result of the strike and its suppression than had ever existed before. The majority opinions of the House and Senate committees' reports were generally favorable to labor, and sharply critical of the use of Pinkerton guards by management. In the wave of public indignation over Pinkertonism that followed Homestead, state after state passed laws against the hiring of outside guards. By 1899, twenty-six states had passed such laws --including Pennsylvania, which had outlawed Pinkerton guards in 1893 without one dissenting vote in the Assembly.

The question of hiring guards was only one aspect of the problem of labor relations, however. Unionism throughout the steel industry was effectively destroyed by the victory of the Carnegie Company over the Amalgamated Association. In 1897 and 1899, the Association lost its last major strongholds in Jones & Laughlin and Illinois Steel without putting up a fight. The last lodge in a steel plant gave up its charter in 1903, and for the next nearly forty years there were no unions within the steel mills of the nation.

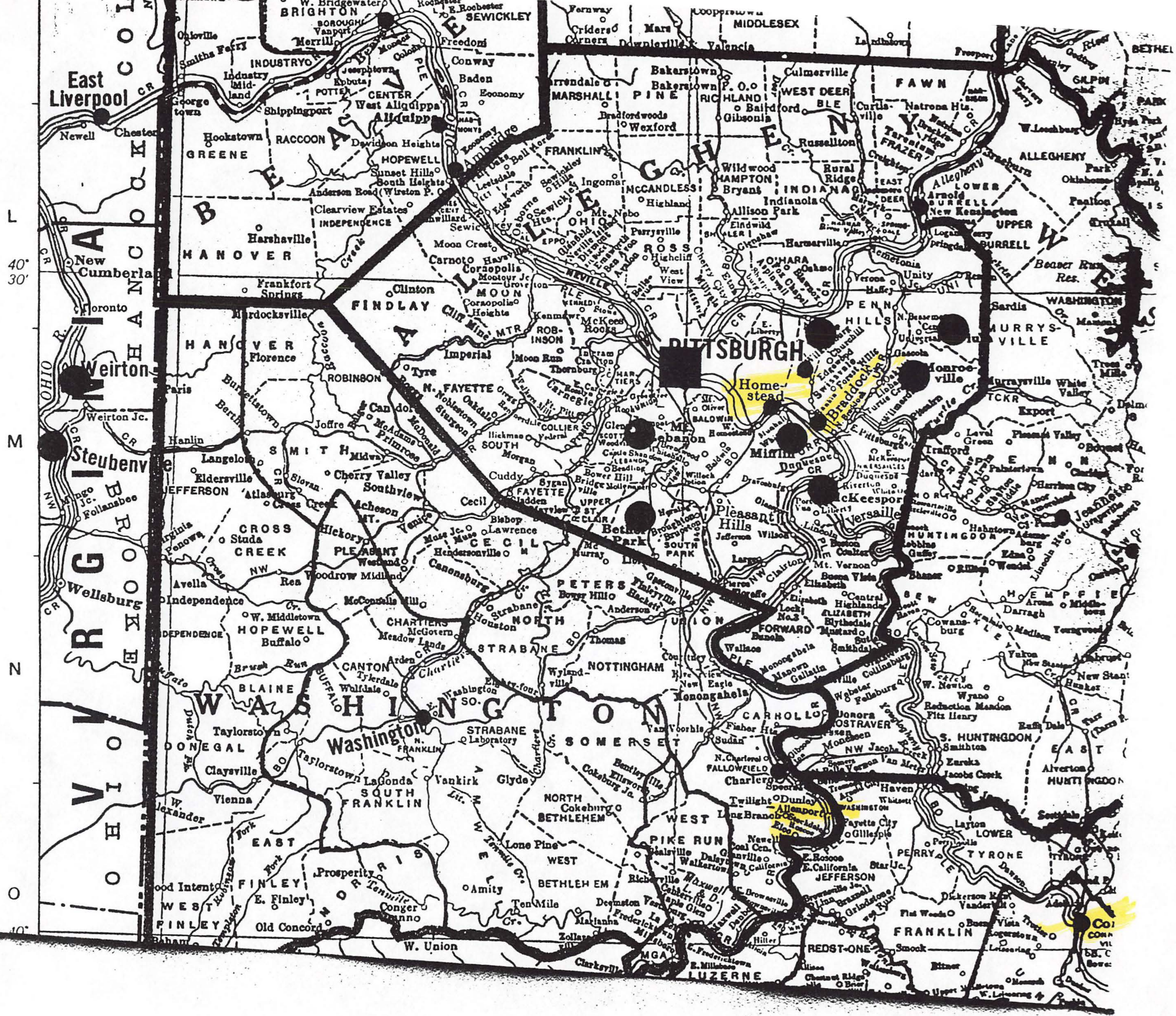
Individual workers at Homestead also paid dearly for the strike. Some of the leaders continued to pay throughout their lives. They lost everything they had possessed in Homestead -- their jobs, their homes, their personal possessions. And through the efficiency of the blacklist throughout the trade, they were forever denied employment in the steel industry. John McLuckie, the former mayor of Homestead, was an example. He was discovered by one of Carnegie's friends working as an unskilled laborer in a Mexican mine near the Gulf of California. He had lost everything but his pride. He refused financial help from Carnegie when it was offered him.

Those old employees who were able to get their jobs back after the strike found conditions changed under the new "non-union order" that prevailed. Within a year, tonnage rates for rollers, shearmen, tablemen, and heaters were cut more than half, from an average on all these skilled jobs of 9.6 cents down to 4.4 cents a ton. The minimum for the sliding scale was abolished in 1892, and the entire sliding-scale principle was abandoned in 1894. In the next few years, the price of steel billets, which had once been used to determine the wage scale, rose 40 per cent, while wages at Homestead and Edgar Thomson increased only 10 per cent. The twelve-hour shift, seven-day week prevailed now throughout the industry. And Carnegie went on giving libraries and wondering why so few adults made use of his magnificent gifts.

Ironically enough, it had been Carnegie himself, six years before the strike, who had best expressed the feelings of those men who stood on the banks of the Monongahela on that hot July morning. Carnegie had written, "I would have the public give due consideration to the terrible temptation to which the working man on a strike is sometimes subjected. To expect that one dependent on his daily wage for the necessaries of life will stand by peaceably and see a new man employed in his stead, is to expect much. This poor man may have a wife and children depending upon his labor. No wise employer will lightly lose his old employees."

And that is what the fighting at Homestead had been all about.

By the way, if you have not made the connections, the pink in the title referred to the Pinkertons, Gold to Emma Goldman and plaid to the Scottish ancestry of Carnegie. The gray was a little tricky. It refers to the Homestead Grays a very famous baseball team that played in the black baseball leagues prior to the integration of professional baseball. I'm sorry for the length of the presentation but thank you for being patient with me. I would be happy to discuss this subject further.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Cherry Valley
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CHARTIERS
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Wolfdale
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Brush Run
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Finleyville
Hackett
Gastonville
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Wyland
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Allenport
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Coal Center
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Brownsville
Fayette City
Gillespie
FORWARD
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Wallace
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Coraopolis Heights
Kenmawr
ROBINSON
McKees Rocks
Moon Run
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Thornburg
Carnegie
COLLIER
SOUTH FAYETTE
Morgan
Cuddy
Bridgeville
UPPER ST. CLAIR
Bethel Park
Library
Pleasant Hills
SOUTH PARK
Jefferson
Large
Clairton
PITTSBURGH
Homestead
Braddock
Mt. Lebanon
Mifflin
Duquesne
McKeesport
Versailles
PENN HILLS
Verona
Unity
Oakmont
Monroeville
Murrysville
MURRYSVILLE
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ALLEGHENY
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UPPER BURRELL
Arnold
New Kensington
Trafford
PENN
Jeannette
Irwin
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Huntingdon
Adamsburg
Wendel
HEMPFIELD
Madison
Yukon
Youngwood
SEWICKLEY
Cowansburg
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Fellsburg
ROSTRAVER
Monessen
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Smithton
Jacobs Creek
EAST HUNTINGDON
Alverton
Scottdale
PERRY
Perryopolis
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JEFFERSON
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Vanderbilt
FRANKLIN
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Layton
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Buena Vista
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