



Name of Lesson

Pullman Strike of 1894

Purpose of Lesson/Overview

The purpose of this lesson is to allow students to understand the impact the Pullman Strike of 1894 had on the national scale as well as the labor movement throughout time while honing their ability to interpret primary source documents. The lesson should help students understand the role people have in promoting change in areas such as safety, freedom, equality, and justice. The lesson should also help students understand the Pullman Strike from a variety of different perspectives including a woman's and analyze the cause and effect chain.

This lesson will be broken up into three different parts and will take 3-4 class periods depending how long is spent on each task. The first part of the lesson is an overview of the National Pullman Strike of 1894 via PowerPoint. The second part of the lesson provides students with a document packet that will include pictures as well and answer the corresponding questions. The second part of the lesson plan is to have students participate in an activity for them to reflect on the events of 1894 with a concentration on the relationship between Pullman and his workers and how this affected the results of the strike.

Objectives

After this lesson, students should have an understanding on the history of the Pullman Strike of 1894. They should understand how the strike impacted the labor movement then and today. They should also understand how to understand how to utilize photographs and primary sources to evaluate an individual's role - whether male or female - in promoting societal change in order to achieve the American Dream.

State Standards

Change, Continuity, and Context

SS.H.3.9-12: Evaluate the methods utilized by people and institutions to promote change.

Perspectives

SS.H.6.9-12: Analyze the concept and pursuit of the American Dream.

SS.H.7.9-12: Identify the role of individuals, groups, and institutions in people's struggle for safety, freedom, equality and justice.

SS.H.8.9-12: Analyze key historical events and contributions of individuals through a variety of perspectives, including those of historically underrepresented groups.

Duration



3 to 4 class periods (50 minutes to an hour)

Materials

PowerPoint presentation. Visual Resource Packet. Textual Resource Packet. Activities. List of Related Books.

Procedure

Period One

1. Present students with the introductory PowerPoint to the lesson. The PowerPoint presentation will take from fifteen to twenty minutes.
2. Have students break into groups of four to complete the first task of the lesson plan. Hand out the pictures with questions to each group from the visual resource packet. Assign one picture to each group. Explain to the students to look at the picture and try to decipher what is happening and to discuss with their group without looking at the questions. Allot ten to fifteen minutes of discussion.
3. The students should then answer the corresponding questions for each picture individually and once again discuss with the group. Allot five to ten minutes for this activity.
4. The groups will then present to the class their picture and questions. During the presentation, instruct the students to voice out any questions or disagreements and to write down the class agreed answered. Allot fifteen to thirty minutes for the class discussion.

Period Two

1. Divide students into groups of four. Hand out a single article to each group. These articles contain discussion questions. Allot fifteen to twenty minutes allow students to read through the articles and answer the questions using text content individually. They can divide the questions among themselves.
2. Have students discuss the questions amongst their groups and have them write an informative summary on the content of their articles as a group. Allot ten to fifteen minutes for the summary.
3. Each group will present to the class the summary they have written. Allot fifteen to twenty minutes for the presentations.

Period Three

1. Introduce the *Pullman v American Railway Union* Activity to the students. Explain the rules and read through the separate roles. Allot five to ten minutes for explanation.
2. Take down the names of the students for specific roles. If more than one student wants to be Pullman or Debs, take a class vote. Allot five to ten minutes for roles.
3. Hand out all the articles from the resource packet for student research. Explain to the students that it is recommended for them to read all of the articles. Allot thirty to forty minutes.

Period Four

1. Go through *Pullman v American Railway Union* Activity. Allot a whole class period.

Pullman v American Railway Union



Roles:

- George Pullman
 - One student will be in charge of researching Pullman and his view on the Pullman Strike and Boycott of 1894. He or she must write down what he or she will say during the trial to defend Pullman's view. The goal of the student playing Pullman is to convince the jury that the American Railway Union was wrong for rallying his workers against him. The student must use historical facts.
- Eugene V Debs
 - One student will be in charge of researching Debs and his view on the Pullman Strike and Boycott of 1894. He or she must write down what he or she will say during the trial to defend Debs' view, as well as the American Railway Union. The goal of the student playing Debs is to convince the jury that Pullman was wrong for cutting wages without cutting rent. The student must use historical facts.
- Union Lawyers
 - Three to five students will play the Union Lawyers and their job is to come up with question to make Debs' actions look justifiable. They must also come up with questions during their turn to cross-examine Pullman. Their goal is to make Pullman look like a horrible employer. The students must use historical facts.
- Pullman Company Lawyers
 - Three to five students will play the Company Lawyers and their job is to come up with question to make Pullman look like a victim of Debs' collaboration with his workers. They must also come up with questions during their turn to cross-examine Debs. Their goal is to make Debs look like a greedy man who took advantage of the situation. The students must use historical facts.
- Jury
 - The rest of the class will be responsible for taking down important notes and evidence that lawyers, Pullman, and Debs use during the trial. The students cannot look at other evidence besides what is provided during court. Their goal is to settle the argument between the two parties through the judicial system, while trying to remain neutral. At the end of the trial, the jury will take a vote to see if Debs is incarcerated or Pullman is fined for instigating the strike. During their verdict they must provide a valid reason for swinging either way.

Articles will be provided for the students to do research, however the students can look up additional material. The "jury" also has to research the background of Pullman, before the strike. **The real verdict: Debs is incarcerated and the circuit court passes an injunction to help cut the strike.**



Pullman v American Railway Union

Roles:

- George Pullman
 - One student will be in charge of researching Pullman and his view on the Pullman Strike and Boycott of 1894. He or she must write down what he or she will say during the trial to defend Pullman's view. The goal of the student playing Pullman is to convince the jury that the American Railway Union was wrong for rallying his workers against him. The student must use historical facts.
- Eugene V Debs
 - One student will be in charge of researching Debs and his view on the Pullman Strike and Boycott of 1894. He or she must write down what he or she will say during the trial to defend Debs' view, as well as the American Railway Union. The goal of the student playing Debs is to convince the jury that Pullman was wrong for cutting wages without cutting rent. The student must use historical facts.
- Union Lawyers
 - Three to five students will play the Union Lawyers and their job is to come up with question to make Debs' actions look justifiable. They must also come up with questions during their turn to cross-examine Pullman. Their goal is to make Pullman look like a horrible employer. The students must use historical facts.
- Pullman Company Lawyers
 - Three to five students will play the Company Lawyers and their job is to come up with question to make Pullman look like a victim of Debs' collaboration with his workers. They must also come up with questions during their turn to cross-examine Debs. Their goal is to make Debs look like a greedy man who took advantage of the situation. The students must use historical facts.
- Jury
 - The rest of the class will be responsible for taking down important notes and evidence that lawyers, Pullman, and Debs use during the trial. The students cannot look at other evidence besides what is provided during court. Their goal is to settle the argument between the two parties through the judicial system, while trying to remain neutral. At the end of the trial, the jury will take a vote to see if Debs is incarcerated or Pullman is fined for instigating the strike. During their verdict they must provide a valid reason for swinging either way.

The articles provided allow students to do research on their roles, however the students can look up additional material. The "jury" also has to research the background of Pullman, before the strike.

The real verdict: Debs is incarcerated and the circuit court passes an injunction to help cut the strike.



PRES. DEBS' APPEAL TO RAILROAD EMPLOYEES

President Debs issued the following appeal to railway employees of the country yesterday:

"Chicago, Ill., June 29. - To the Railway Employees of America: The struggle with the Pullman company has developed into a contest between the producing classes and the money power of the country. This is what Lincoln predicted at the close of the civil war, and it was this reflection that gave the great emancipator his gloomiest foreboding. We stand upon the ground that the workingmen are entitled to a just proportion of the proceeds of their labor. This the Pullman company denied them. Reductions had been made from time to time until the employees earned barely sufficient wages to live, not enough to prevent them from sinking deeper and deeper into Pullman's debt, thereby mortgaging their bodies and souls, as well as their children's, to that heartless corporation.

"Up to this point the fight was between the American Railway Union and the Pullman Company. The American Railway Union resolved that its members would refuse to handle Pullman cars and equipment. Then the railway corporations, through the General Managers' Association; came to the rescue, and in a series of whereas declared to the world that they would go into partnership with Pullman, so to speak, and stand by him in his devilish work of starving his employees to death. The American Railway union accepted the gage of war, and thus the contest is now on between the railway corporations united solidly upon the one hand and the labor forces upon the other. Every railroad employee of the country should take his stand against the corporations in this fight, for if it should be lost corporations will have despotic sway and all employees will be reduced

to a condition scarcely removed above chattel slavery; but the fight will not be lost. The great principle of American manhood and independence is involved. Corporate power, drunk with its own excesses, has presumed too far upon the forbearance of the American people, and, notwithstanding a subsidized press to which there are many noble exceptions, public sympathy is with the striking employees, who are merely contending for the right of their fellow toilers to receive living wages for their work.

"I appeal to strikers everywhere to refrain from any act of violence. Let there be no interference with the agents of the companies involved, and, above all, let there be no act of depredation. A man who will destroy property or violate law is an enemy and not a friend to the cause of labor. The great public is with us and we need only to maintain a dignified, honest, straightforward policy to achieve victory. Let it be understood that this strike is not ordered by myself or any other individual; nor is the strike inaugurated anywhere except by consent and authority from a majority of the employees themselves.

"Neither is this a fight simply of the American Railway union. The question of organization ought not to be raised, but every man who believes in organized railroad labor should take his stand on the side of labor and its battles for his rights and those of his fellowmen. I have faith in the great body of railway employees of the country and am confident they will maintain an unbroken front in spite of any opposition that may be brought to bear against them. I am perfectly confident of success. We cannot fail.

E. V. Debs,

Chicago Times, June 30, 1894



PULLMAN STRIKE RUMOR

Report of Dissatisfaction among Employees Denied by the Company

There are rumors of dissatisfaction among the employees of the Pullman Palace Car Company at Pullman and of a general strike for higher wages to take place May 1. It is said that the grievances of the men are based primarily on a reduction of wages from \$3 and \$3.50 to \$2 and \$2.50 per day and that though the workmen submitted to the cut last year that they are now organizing and affiliating with the Building Trades' Council and will make a fight for restitution of the old scale. The number of men involved is about 4,000. It is claimed that there is discrimination against men who live in houses not owned by the Pullman Company and that exorbitant rent is charged others. It is also charged that the company is constructing a wall of masonry about its plant in anticipation of a siege and that numerous watchmen have been engaged to guard the works.

General Manager Brown, speaking for the company said:

"We have not been cognizant of dissatisfaction among our men. The wall that we are building is along the north and east sides of the works and is simply a continuation of the ornamental and protective wall we started to build several years ago. It has no reference to expected trouble. It finishes the work begun, gives work to a number of unemployed men and is for protection against tramps as much as anything else. We are not increasing the force of watchmen. As to the wage cut, we were forced to reduce operating expenses like every other plant during the financial depression. At \$2 and \$2.50 per day, six days in the week, we think our men are getting very good living wages as times are. As over half the men employed by us live outside of Pullman it can be seen that no discrimination is being made in favor of our own renters, though as a matter of course, as between two good men, the one living at Pullman would be given the preference where a choice is necessary.

Chicago Journal, April 23, 1894



BIG STRIKE AT PULLMAN

**Three Thousand Employees of
Car Company Quit Work This
Forenoon.**

**MEN IN THE FREIGHT SHOPS
STOP FIRST.**

**Large Force Out Before Noon - Dis-
satisfaction Over Reduced Wages
is the Cause.**

The vast shops of the Pullman Palace-Car company are idle and empty this afternoon. The company's employees struck this morning.

The 4,300 men who draw wages at the great corporation's Pullman plant went to work this morning, as usual, at 6:30, and for one hour the manifold operations of the works proceeded in the ordinary way. Then there was a stop at the freight shops at the northern end of town. About 150 men were at work here. They dropped their tools and first notice that the townspeople had of the trouble was when the body of workmen marched out of the freight shops and started rapidly but quietly south to call out the men in the other departments. As they spread over the graveled roadway and filed by the huge buildings the word swiftly went around: "The men are out! They've struck!"

"We expect to have every man out by 10 o'clock," said one of the leaders to a Daily News reporter at this hour.

The strikers who had the notice to quit quickly spread about the shops and soon bodies of workmen began filing from the other shops. They were all perfectly orderly and the police detachment which the company sent for had nothing to do.

The company's officers were quite taken by surprise. They were resting in the belief that the men would take no further steps until they appointed a committee to examine the company's books, as Mr. Pullman invited them to do, that they might satisfy themselves that the company was really keeping the works going at a loss to itself for the purpose of providing employment for the men.



Mr. Pullman's Statement

In respect to the article, President George M. Pullman made the following statement:

"I was advised this morning that the men were at work in all departments, but about 8:30 o'clock I received a telephone message that the freight-car builders, about seventy-three in number, had gone quietly out, without making any remarks to anybody, leaving upward of 100 men in other departments of the freight shops. Subsequently a telephone message was received from the manager of the works that R. W. Brown, one of the committee, had called them out in other shops and that quite a large number had responded to that call. We have just received information that there are about 1,600 men at work in all departments of the town and shops. If this is correct it would appear that about 2,000 men have gone out from the different departments of the car works. I cannot account for this action of the men in any way.

Among the rumors afloat in Pullman this afternoon was one that the action of the men had been precipitated by the discharge of some employees who had been active, on behalf of the workmen, in the reports of grievances to the company and the conferences which have been going on the last few days. This assertion was said to have been strengthened by a showing that the difference in the men's wages does not equal the loss the company claims it is undergoing on the contracts. Some 200 girls from the linen and laundry department assembled in the Arcade building. They perfected an organization of The American Railway union and every female employee at the shops is expected to join.

The company's position in regard to

the wage question was too well known to need much explanation. From the first the officers and Mr. Pullman himself told the men that their wages could not be increased this spring. Steps were being taken to settle the minor differences and grievances, but all negotiations were abruptly stopped by the action of the men this morning and the officers are now waiting to see how far the strike will extend.

AT THE GENERAL OFFICES.

Sensation Caused by Word of the Strike-Reports from the Works.

When the first news was received at the offices it caused a profound sensation, as such a thing was not thought of by the officials. Mr. Pullman said that he could not account for it and that it was a farce on the part of the men and was mere schoolboy play.

Advises received from Pullman were that Committeeman Brown, who had taken an active part in the movement, this morning went through the work, announcing that the men were going on strike, and this had the desired effect on the greater portion of the men who were inclined to lay down their tools.

When the news was received at the offices in the city, Vice-President Wickes, who had just returned from Pullman, was astounded. Mr. Pullman wore an anxious look and it was evident that he was deeply moved. The thought that the men would strike had not for a moment entered his head. The men then said that if they found the company was losing money they would remain at work, but if the statements of Mr. Pullman were found to be incorrect they would quit.

The men claimed, it is said, that the company was not losing money. They



said that the difference in the wages they were receiving would not balance the loss that the company claimed it was undergoing by taking contracts at less than cost price. When asked about this to-day Mr. Pullman characterized it as absurd and said that he could prove in a few minutes that the men did not know what they were talking about.

As the telegrams reached him from the works announcing that the men were leaving every minute, he was dumb-founded and read over the messages in silence. It was a big blow to him, as he says that he takes a personal interest in the matter. He told the men that he was willing to keep them at work, even at a loss to the company, just for the sake of the town of Pullman.

Chicago News, May 11, 1894



Men Want More Pay

Grievances of Pullman Employees.

Say They Cannot Live on the Wages Paid in the Palace Car Shops-Little Encouragement Given by the Company's Officials.

The committee appointed by the freight-car builders employees in the shops of the Pullman Palace Car Company obtained little satisfaction from the company yesterday. The committee called on Vice-President Wicks to represent that the men could not make a living at the wages now paid there and asked for an increase. The committee was informed that it could not be granted at present. Vice President Wicks said of the conference:

"Three of the men employees in the freight department called and asked that the scale of wages paid in May, 1893, be restored. I told them the company could not do that panic there has been little doing in the line of car-building, and a good deal of competition for that. In order to keep our employed we had taken the contracts, I told them, at cost and sometimes below cost. If we hadn't taken the contracts at low rates we couldn't have got them at all, and the men would have been thrown out of employment. When the conditions change so that we was certain we would pay better wages.

"The men made no threats of striking; they deprecated any such idea. They simply came to ask if we couldn't do a little better by them. While the company has not been paying as much as formerly, still the men have been at work and have been earning enough to keep themselves, or almost enough."

Rents Are Not Reduced.

"No, we have not reduced the rents any, because we think them fair. We receive in rents on the houses of workmen only 3 to 4 per cent on the investment, and that isn't a big return certainly. If the company takes the rents and so suffer again? The last winter we have undertaken some permanent improvements, in order to give the men work outside of car building. The men understand all that and appreciate it, I think.

"We had a large force of men at work last spring and the early summer. The no in overtime and certainly made good wages. They shared in our prosperity. Why should they not now share the burden of the hard times? The force was reduced in August and September to 1,000 men. The rest stayed around Pullman, some of them going to the fair and having in effect a two months vacation. As soon as the cars used in the work's fair service were with withdrawn and the company could get the repair shops. We have now 3,000 men at work in the car shops proper. The average wages in the works is \$1.85 a day when it was \$2.25 before. The laborers got \$1.35."

The committee upon retiring reported the result to Vice-President Wicks, but the so low that it feels it cannot afford in any way to increase its expenses. The fact remains, however, that nearly every employee of the Pullman Company that rents more or less for his rent. That couldn't be wages to enable him to keep square with



Men Want More Pay

Continued from page 1

his rent and maintain his family.

"A committee representing each branch of the service will call on the officials of the company Monday and if an audience is granted will take the matter over. If a conference falls amicably to adjust matters I shall advise the men to adjust arbitration. In the American Railway Union the one-man power is done away with and the officers are merely servants of the members large. Hence it is impossible for me to say whether the men will accept my suggestion as to arbitration.

Strong Talk of a Strike

A meeting of Pullman employees was held last night in Kensington Turner Hall, which was filled to overflowing. In calling the meeting to order, Chairman Heat Yooto said: "We do not want a strike, and we're not looking for one, when our committee conferred with the company today. But finding it utterly impossible to sustain life and clothe ourselves on present reduced wages, we stated our demands and expect to get them; if not by the company's consent, then by the strike, which is our remedy.

The committee which called on the Pullman officials held a secret conference after their big meeting. A report of their action was prepared to submit Monday to President Bodhe and the general council of the American railroad Union. It is believed that a refusal to grant an advance in wages will be followed by an immediate declaration of a strike. Vice President Howard stated that in a case of strike the American Railroad Union would be heartily backed by the Federation of Labor and the Building Trades Council.

Chicago Herald, May 6, 1894

