

1. How should the Homestead Strike be remembered? Did you experience in the trial change what you think its “lesson” is?

The Homestead strike was actually a lockout that occurred after the Carnegie Steel Company refused to negotiate with the union at the Homestead Steel Works. Andrew Carnegie was directly involved in locking the workers out and Henry Clay Frick was responsible for spreading the message and building a fence around the mill. The entire incident can be traced back to these powerful people. Poor conditions, long shifts, and small wages fostered a terrible atmosphere around the work of the mill. All of this caused tensions to run high in the town that depended on the work of the mill.

The lesson of the Homestead strike is that the greed of the era overpowered decency and humanity. Frick and Carnegie refused to treat their workers with respect and common decency to turn over a large profit. Naturally, workers would not want to take this terrible life that they were living, watching people die and getting injured every day. The workers correctly refused to take the disrespectful ways of the elitist men in control.

Looking further into the men and their actions through the trial extensively shows this idea of greed and inhumanity. The trial showed first person accounts of these conditions, like the Kracha or O'Donnell statements, showing the terrible life the workers had to live for the richer men to make more money. It also showed the public's view on the situation, and it was vastly negative. The Count and Alexander Berkman showed that the population stood with the workers, contrasting them from the ultra wealthy. Another thing it provided was a look into the heartlessness of Henry Frick during the affair. All in all, looking at the homestead strike through this detailed and human lens gives a new

perspective on it, and might make one think the Homestead strike should be remembered as the prime example of Gilded Age greed and corruption that shined in all sides of life at the time.

2. How does Homestead change the way you look at labor relations today?

Comparing the Homestead strike to modern day labor disputes shows how much labor relations have evolved yet also stayed the same over time. Labor unions were at a high when the Homestead strike occurred. Naturally, the greedy bosses of these large companies would want rid of these unions as they pose a threat to their money driven agenda. These men would do anything to do this, such as sending an army to confront a striking union.

Nowadays, unionization has decreased. This can be traced back to disputes like Homestead and the increase in employer pushback as a result. So, ripples of the dispute still show today. However, we can still see union disputes in our modern world, such as the Writers Guild of America strike of 2023. These writers did not believe they were getting payed and treated fairly in the industry. Much like Homestead, this strike almost shut down an entire industry for months. I believe that these writers were doing the right thing, like the Homestead workers. Standing up against these executives was the only way to correctly handle the situation and show others that they could do the same. And of course, this can also be said about the Homestead strike. The labor disputes of today are incredibly similar to the ones of the gilded age.