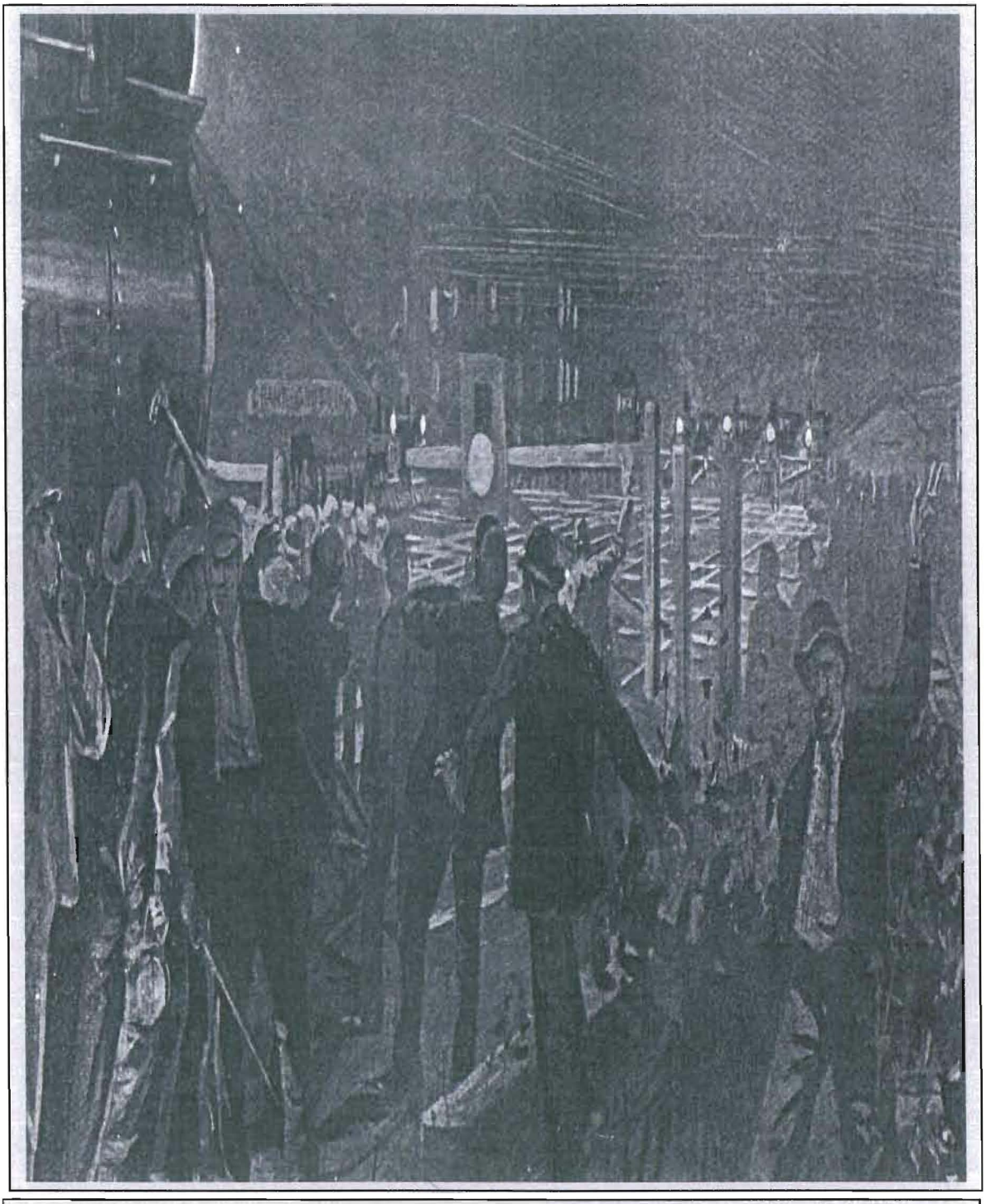

The Turning Point
A Historical Look At the Pullman Strike and Boycott
By
David Swindell
Illustration from Harper's Weekly July 14, 1894

Abstract

Presented by David Swindell for the partial completion of an MA Degree in History. Given on this date:_____ Entitled: The Turning Point: A Historical Look At the Pullman Strike and Boycott, and The Political, Social, and Economic Ramifications to the Nation. Abstract approved: Karen M. Smith

A Brief Description of this Work

This thesis attempts a comprehensive approach to scholarship. The historical record is established first; next, attention is given to the historical interpretation of events. The final section of this work explores the long-range ramifications for the nation and the social and political consequences of unrestricted corporate freedom. The methodology throughout this work employs traditional historical tools plus other disciplines of study.

The Pullman strike and boycott served as a turning point for the nation in many ways. The strike weakened the fragile coalition of American railway unions. At the same time, the strike brought to the attention of lawmakers and others in responsible positions that business reforms were both necessary and inevitable. The strike also added to the growing momentum for governmental regulation of railroads. Worker safety and overall working conditions were side issues indirectly linked to the strike through greater worker dissatisfaction and complaints against Pullman and the railroad corporations. The worker grievances of low pay, abusive foremen, and needless deaths and injuries only exacerbated the many problems facing workers in this era.

The final part of this thesis incorporates statistical information into the text strengthening and supporting the premise of this work. In the case of the Chicago Strike, this major disruption only served to deepen the depression and expand class hatreds. The period of the late 1890s was a time of immense social change and upheaval. This work attempts to capture the spirit of the age.

THE TURNING POINT

A Historical Look At the Pullman Strike And Boycott,

And

Its Political, Social, and Economic Ramifications For the Nation

A Thesis

Presented to
The Department of History

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

In Partial Fulfillment

Of Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Approved by the Department Chair

Approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere gratefulness is extended to the many libraries and institutions for their gracious help and assistance. The staff of the Harold Washington library in Chicago had an eager willingness to assist by making phone calls and tracking down materials. The Special Collections Department at Harold Washington was very cooperative in reproducing key documents and photographs. The Newberry Library in Chicago helped and understood the research needs for this project providing valuable assistance. The staff at the Chicago Historical Society had a deep interest in this thesis project. Also, many thanks go out to the photo reproduction services at the society; the copies they made are superb. The collection of old Chicago photographs at the Chicago Historical Society rivals any in the city. The staff at the National Archives and Record Administration, Great Lakes Region, provided access to court records on short notice. The Anschutz Library at the University of Kansas, the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka, the Special Collections Department at the University of Illinois in Chicago, and the library staff at Hale Library Kansas State University all deserve recognition for their assistance.

The staff at the Washburn University library assisted in so many ways that it would be difficult to thank them all. Cal Melick at the Washburn inter-library department diligently tracked down the many requests from universities and libraries across the nation. At the Washburn Law Library, Paul Arrigo bent over backward. To Paul is owed a huge debt of gratitude.

A special thanks is given to all the people who aided in the completion of this thesis. My niece, Theresa Swindell, helped in catalogue the huge amount of materials assembled. Michael Web from Wichita University assisted in helping find statistical materials. Don Brunnert was valuable in providing expertise into railroad accounting and serving as a technical advisor. The faculty team at Emporia State University had understanding and patience during this project. Geri Murray and Mike Bera gave their help and support during the past two years. Acknowledgments are also in order for Susan Tolbert at the Smithsonian

Institution, Fred Romanski at the National Archives, and to Becky Nioce for her help with this project.

PREFACE

The rapid growth of American railways after the Civil War facilitated massive changes in the transportation system of this country. Goods could now reach the interior of the U.S. with greater speed and dependability. During this period, track laying reached all-time highs. New markets were opened up in the western United States. Additionally, new terminals and centers of production were established. The preeminence of Chicago in the grain trade illustrates this point. The ideal weather and soil conditions of the Midwestern plains made the growing of hard winter wheat both feasible and profitable. Reliable transportation into Chicago provided farmers with new markets for their products. In a few short years, the Midwest would surpass other areas of the country in both quality and output in wheat production.

The use of Chicago as a major railroad terminal continued to grow impressively through the late nineteenth century. By the 1890s, twenty-four major railroad companies were operating out of the city.[1] Railroad properties occupied a huge expanse of real estate. There were many large passenger stations operating within Chicago. The volume of rail traffic departing from and arriving in the city during these years was staggering. Adding to the effectiveness of this major rail hub was the city's proximate location to Lake Michigan. The water rail connection made Chicago a more vibrant center for commercial activities. With the strong railroad presence in Chicago, other industries located and grew within its center. Giants in the meatpacking industry like Armor and Swift transformed the slaughter business by purchasing Midwestern beef and hogs, then transporting them to Chicago by rail. The Union Stockyard in Chicago became one of the largest centers for the wholesale beef trade in the country. Likewise, the milling of grains became big business in Chicago through the transportation network established there.

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1. *Report On The Chicago Strike of June-July 1894, By the United States Strike Commission* (Washington: Government Printing Office1895)p. xxx.

Despite the rapid growth that characterized the period of the "Gilded Age," there were huge destabilizing forces at work that tore at the very fabric of society. This was a time of unrestricted business exploitation. Great fortunes were made and lost in a short time frame. Robber barons and large trusts ruled the day. The two major economic upheavals during this historical period were the Panic of 1873 (a depression caused by currency problems) and the Depression of 1893. The Depression of 1893 would last for five years greatly affecting the business climate of the nation. Adding to these difficulties were terrible social problems. A huge influx of immigrants and displaced workers from agrarian communities flooded into the cities. The major cities of the United States had become dirty and overcrowded. Diseases such as cholera and tuberculosis ravaged the population. Labor unrest became frequent as workers struggled for survival in a cruel industrial system of sweatshops and unsafe factories. Railroad workers had to endure long hours. Frequent accidents often left the affected worker without support for his family. These conditions epitomized the period of the American industrial age.

In the years from 1877 through 1894, Americans continually witnessed some of the worst violence in U.S. labor history. The railroad strike of 1877 was extremely damaging to U.S. railroads. Federal troops had to be called out when railroad yards in Chicago and Pittsburgh were set ablaze. Other railroad strikes were equally troubling. In 1888, a major strike broke out on the Chicago Burlington & Quincy. In 1890, a dispute between William Vanderbilt and the Knights of Labor stimulated a strike on the New York Central. In Chicago, a push for an eight-hour day led to the Haymarket tragedy. (The Haymarket incident took place on May 4, 1886 in which seven police officers were killed and a large number of spectators were wounded. What followed was a bogus trial of the defendants). The Homestead lockout of 1892 illustrated the power and volatility of the American steel industry in those turbulent years. In April of 1894, a major coal strike paralyzed key industrial concerns and some of the nation's railroads. In this period, there were many regional and local strikes. This was a difficult time for the nation. The American industrial system had two different

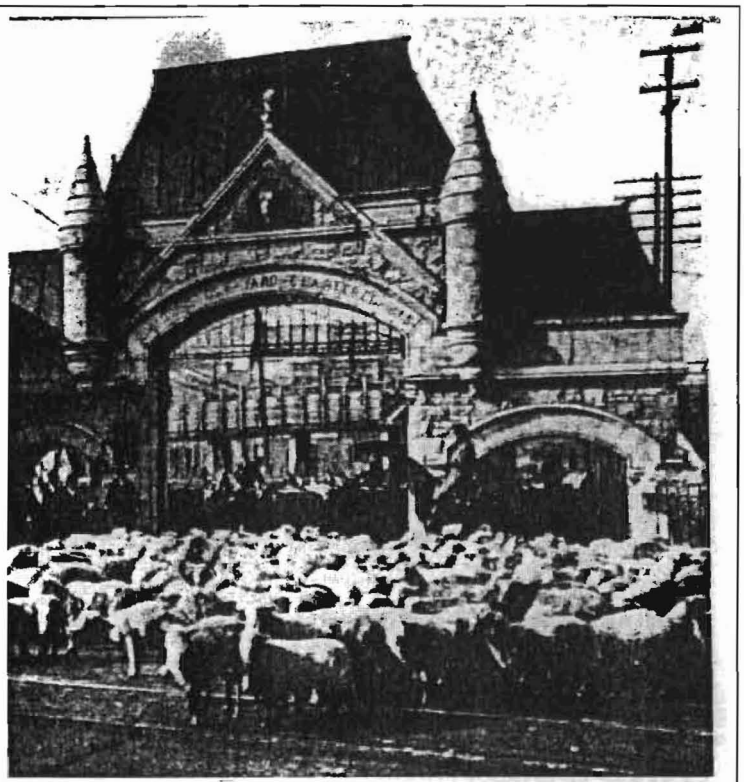
options to consider. It could continue with the same policies of irresponsible capitalism, or it could emerge from the standard of the day and respond to the needs of its workers. Unfortunately for the nation, the majority of businesses chose the first option. This would only lead to future divisiveness and strife.

Research Itinerary

The research phase of this project took me to Chicago for a three-week stay. The itinerary also included a stopover at Indiana State University and the Eugene V. Debs Foundation and home in Terre Haute, Indiana. While in Terre Haute, I took a trip to the Highland Cemetery, which is the final resting place of Eugene and the Debs family. Springfield, Illinois was the next stop on the journey where my research efforts were centered in the Illinois State Library and the Illinois State Archives. In January of 2003, I completed research at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC and the National Archive at College Park, Maryland. I conducted Additional research at the Smithsonian Institution. The collection of photographs at the Smithsonian was extremely helpful in the project.

As part of the overall research efforts, I kept a photo log of significant architectural structures relating to the Chicago Strike. Included in the introductory chapters are additional photos important to Chicago railroad history that were taken on my trip. The inclusion of these photos relates to the significance of Chicago as a railroad hub and the focal point these structures represent in modern times.

Union Stockyard



Stone Gate

Of

Union Stockyard

Built 1879

Picture Dates

To

1902

Taken from Clip Art File

Harold Washington Public Library Chicago Illinois

View Across

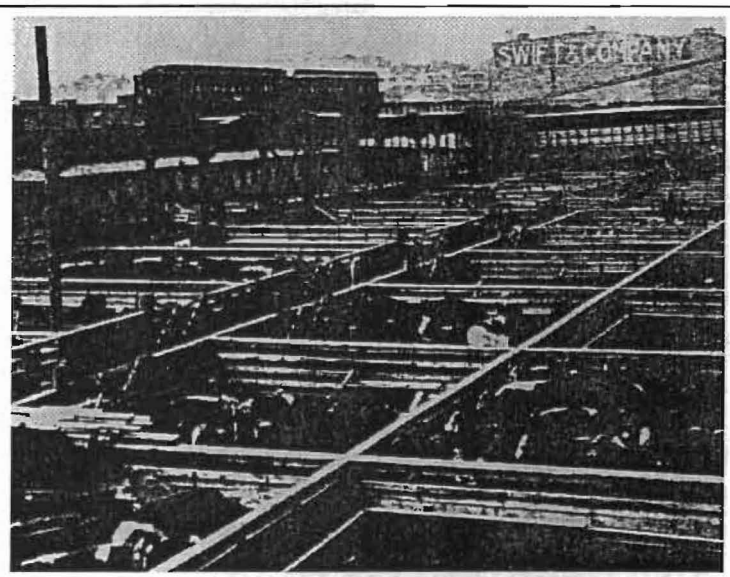
Union Stockyard

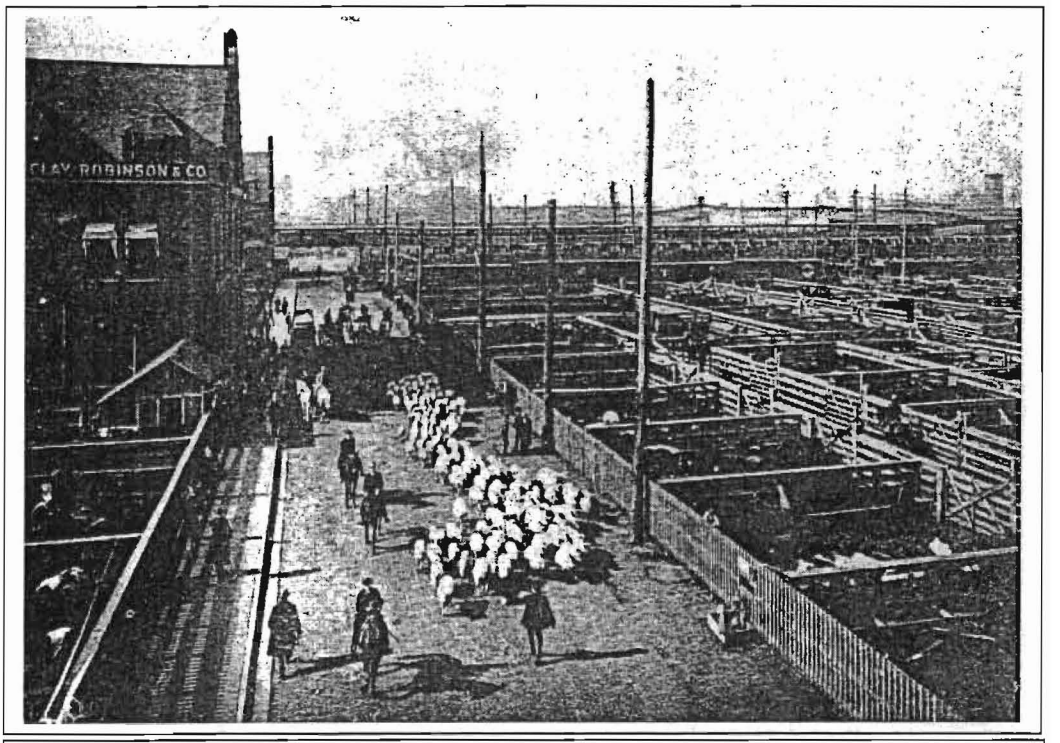
At

Exchange Avenue

1910

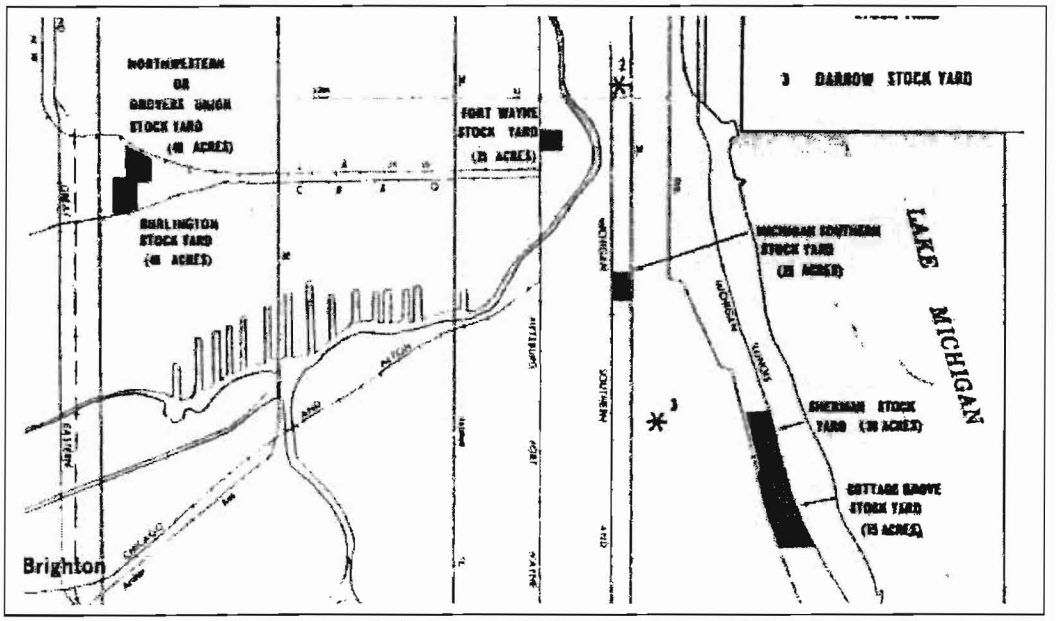
Taken from Clip Art File
Harold Washington Public Library
Chicago Illinois





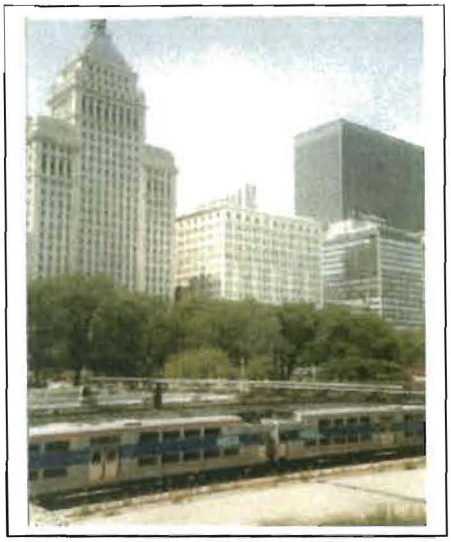
Union Stockyards Early 1900s

Chicago Historical Society Photo

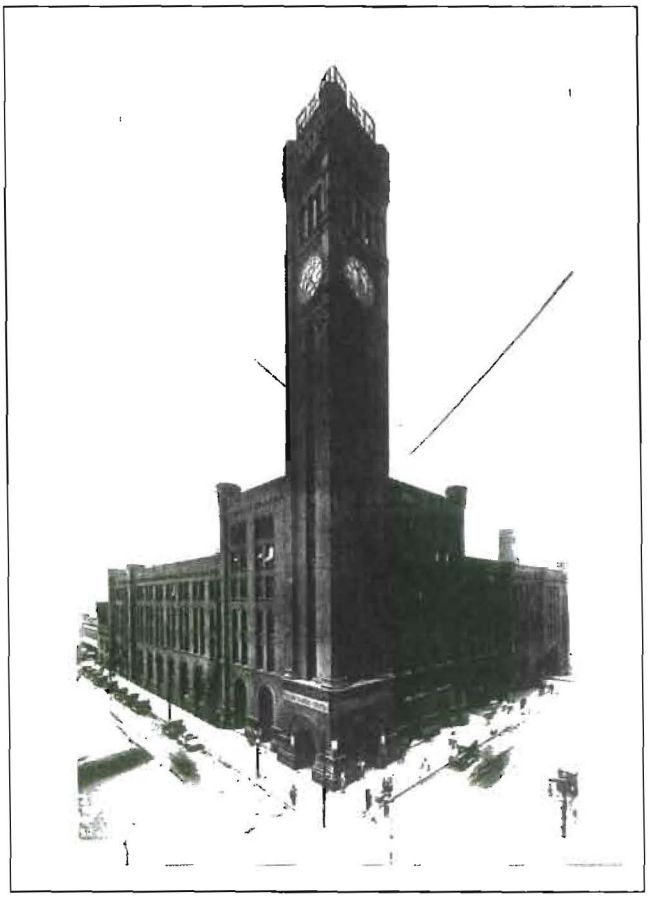


Stock Yards Consolidation Map
Clip Art File Harold Washington Public Library Chicago

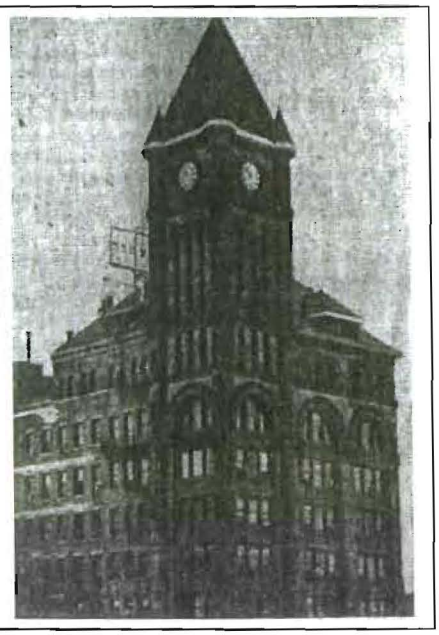
Chicago Northwest Station and Metra Trains



The Railway Exchange Building
Constructed 1904
Later Became the Santa Fe Building
(Center Structure)



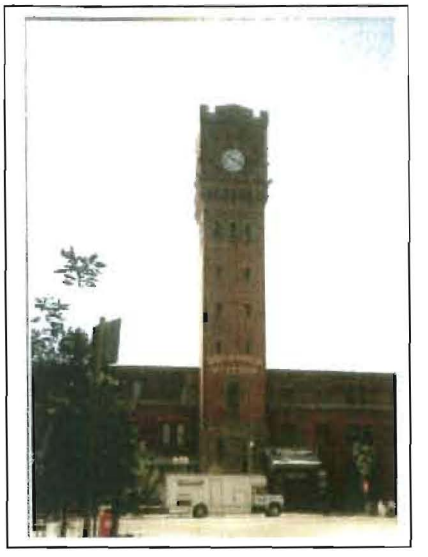
B & O Railroad
Grand Central Station Chicago 1890
Photo from Chicago Historical Society



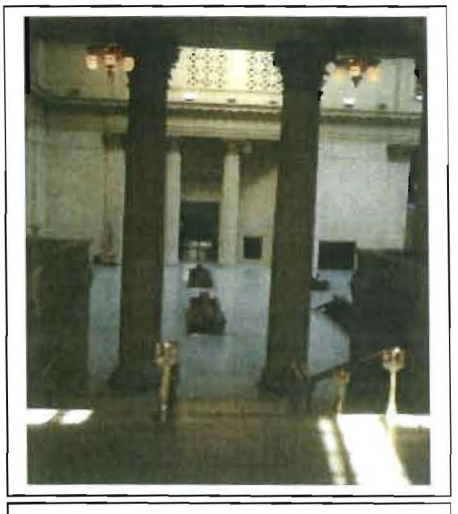
Illinois Central and Gulf Railroad Station
Photo From Chicago Tribune 5/31/1974, Sec1, p.7.

Chicago Railroad Stations and Buildings as they Exist Today

Union Station Chicago



Dearborn Station Chicago



Union Station Interior

Part of the Old Northwest Station

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

Graphs

Lists of Photographs

Part I

Chapter I

RAILROADS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA

As railroad expansion began to accelerate during the late 1860s, problems surfaced which effectively hampered the development of a major railroad network. One huge problem concerned the dissimilarity of track gauges within the U.S. During this initial stage, a universal standard for gauge did not exist. Railroads laid out their track beds anywhere from four feet, eight and a half inches to six feet in width.[2] Later, narrow gauge was developed for use in mountainous regions and for mining operations. The width for narrow gauge is three feet six inches.[3]

To help speed the movement of freight and passengers, some railroads adapted a third rail system. This allowed equipment of different gauges to use the same track-bed. This modification helped ease some of the major pitfalls of operations; however, more permanent solutions were needed. By the 1880s, railroads agreed on a standard gauge of four feet, eight and a half inches. This copied the English system already in place enabling railroads to transfer cars between lines more smoothly and effectively, thus expanding railroad services in the U.S.

The Growth and Consolidation of U. S. Railroads

The construction of many smaller lines proved inefficient in moving large amounts of freight and passengers. A more streamlined system was needed to connect railroads together in a cost-effective manner. In many cases, small roads were competing for the same business along parallel routes. Added to this problem were great underlying instabilities from recessions, bankruptcies, and foreclosures of railroads. The uncontrolled speculative nature of the railroad

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[2] Hilton W. George, "A History of Track Gauge" (*Trains Magazine*, Trains.com, 9/10/2002)
[3] Ibid.

business in this era dampened some investments through frauds and financial mismanagement. Within this business climate, a few men of great skill surfaced. They would take control of these fledgling organizations and merge them into powerful entities.

Railroad Expansion

The New York Central is an example of a railroad that profited through consolidation. Under the careful tutelage of Cornelius Vanderbilt, the road gained market share through acquisitions. The expansion into Albany, New York was especially valuable because it allowed the New York Central to link up with newly purchased western railroads to provide continuous service into Chicago. These careful acquisitions brought together a number of smaller roads into a single intricate system. This formed a powerful organization that would survive well into the twentieth century.

Early Railroad Business Practices

From the period of the first railroads in the 1830s to the implementation of the Interstate Commerce Act in 1878, little was done in the way of Railroad regulation. Railroads could set any rate they chose; in addition, they could discriminate against individuals, shippers, and whole communities. This was accomplished by using secret contracts stipulating preferred rates to individuals and certain businesses. These unfair rates clearly gave a huge advantage to some players in the marketplace. Inability to obtain favorable rates often signified financial ruin.

Rates

The question of rates was of primary concern for shippers. The system of deep discounts to certain suppliers ignited a popular political insurrection. However, before going further, an explanation of how this system worked is in order. William Larrebee, in his work "The Railroad Question," wrote of the abuses committed by railroads of the period. He served as the governor of Iowa

and a member of the Populist Party. Mr. Larrebee had first-hand knowledge of how the early railroad companies worked. He wrote the following:

> The New York Central gave a Utica dry goods merchant a special rate of 9 cents while the Regular rate was 33 cents on first class freight. The lowest special rate granted at Syracuse was as low as 20 percent of the regular traffic rate on first-class goods. David Dows & Company, and Jesse Hoyt & Company, by means of a grain rate from 2 ½ to 5 cents lower than those given to other firms, were able to control in the winter of 1877 the grain trade on New York. [4]

A glaring example of how railroads and large corporations worked together to control prices and eliminate competitors is spelled out in the Hepburn Committee Report. This special committee investigated the connection between Standard Oil and individual rail companies. Below is listed a small excerpt from this special report:

> In 1875, August 1st, the Erie and Central made an agreement with the Standard Oil Company, whereby they agreed to give them a rate as low as the lowest net rate to other parties; and then agreed to pay the Standard Oil Company and to its affiliated companies, a ten per-cent rebate on all shipments of oil. [5]

The pattern of rate discriminations went beyond secret agreements and special deals. Shippers in small cities operated at a severe disadvantage by paying progressively higher rates for less distance traveled. From a business perspective, some additional charges are expected from intermediate points due to a lack of volume. However, in this context, some railroads took advantage of the situation and gouged customers at rates far above the acceptable profit margins. Customers were often locked in to these rates with little transportation or shipping alternatives available in their areas. In an article entitled "The Economic Evils In American Railroad Methods," Professor Richard T. Ely explains how discrimination worked against shippers in smaller or intermediate markets. He also illustrates the great lengths and extraordinary methods to

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4. Larrabee, William, *The Railroad Question: A History and Practical Treatise on Railroads, and Remedies for their Abuse* (Chicago: The Schulte Publishing Company 1893)p. 138.12/7/01

5. *State of New York, Report of the Special Committee on Railroads: Appointed Under a Resolution of the Assembly to Investigate Alleged Abuse*, Vol. 6(Albany: Parsons and Company Printers 1879)p. 43.

which they had to go to find favorable rates. Below is a short excerpt from his article:

> Freight rates are often so much cheaper between competing points than from an intermediate point that freight frequently passes twice over the same track--a waste of labor and capital. Freight is thus sent from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia and New York, and then right back through Pittsburgh to a Western point, so as to get the competitive rate from one of the larger cities. [6]

Railroad Pools

The fierce competition that characterized the American railroads in the 1860s and 1870s led to price wars and destabilization. Battles emerged over territory and customers. Price and rate wars reduced profits and working capital for reinvestment in the infrastructure of each road. To solve this problem, many railroads joined together in working pools. The organization of the pools varied according to their approach. Some pools split revenue, while others regulated the amount of traffic on each line. One of the first pools established in the U. S., consisted of the Chicago Burlington & Quincy, the Chicago Rock Island & Pacific, and the Chicago Northwestern railroads. This pool lasted for fourteen years. [7]

The main controversy concerning pools came from their discriminatory practices. Pools controlled rates at competitive points enabling the companies to maintain excessive schedule rates at local points. [8] These rate policies stirred great unrest, especially in the farming communities of the Midwest. The question of rates would help stimulate the founding of the Grange Movement in Iowa. [9] (The Grangers were a group of farmers who banned together in opposition to the railroads and who promoted specific market strategies for their products).

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6. Ely T. Richard, *The Economic Evils In American Railway Methods*, Vol. LXXIII. (Harper's New Monthly Magazine, August 1886)p. 453.
7. Larrabee, William, *The Railroad Question: A History Practical Treatise on Railroads and Remedies for their Abuse* (Chicago: The Schulte Publishing Company, 1893)pp. 194-195.
8. Ibid. p. 195.
9. Ibid. pp. 194-195.

Railroad Speculation

One way railroad investors could maximize profits was over inflation of stocks. This process became known as stock watering. The purpose of this scheme was to increase dividends for investors. In reality, the watered stock values were fictitious. When railroads consolidated, the watered values often reached unbelievable proportions. The merger combining the Hudson River Railroad into the New York Central system is illustrated in the following example:

> At the time of the consolidation, the capitol stock of the two roads had grown to $44,800,000. Under the consolidation agreement the stock of the new company was fixed $45,000,000. The new company assumed all the bonded and other indebtedness of both roads. If the consolidated manipulators had paused here, the capitol of the new company would have been somewhat less than $60,000,000, or more than three times the cost of the property. But the road was, under existing rates, capable of earning dividends on a much larger capital, and this emergency was met by the issuance of consolidation certificates to the amount of $45,000,000. The total capital of the road was thus increased too and made to pay dividends of over $103,000,000. While the total cost of the road and its equipment as claimed by the company in 1870, was less than $60,000,000. [10]

The Interstate Commerce Commission

The unrestricted financial freedom of the American Railway System came under close scrutiny during the late 1870s. In a number of legislative initiatives and court challenges, the railroads were brought into the arena of public regulation. In *Munn vs. Illinois*, the United States Supreme Court ruled in 1877 that private business could be regulated if it served the public interest.[11] In 1887 Congress passed "An Act to Regulate Commerce" thus creating The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC.) The regulatory authority for the commission came under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution. [12]

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10. Ibid. p. 168.
11. 94 U. S. 113.
12. *The First Annual Report of the Interstate Commerce Commission*, December 1, 1887 (Washington: Government Printing office 1887)

When the ICC was founded, it focused on pricing and the treatment of customers.[13] Later, the commission would acquire additional authority to regulate the following matters: reporting procedures, establishing a uniform system of accounts, launching investigations under its own power, suspending tariffs, prescribing reasonable rates, and dividing revenue. [14] Later, the commission received the authority to rule on railroad mergers.

One of the biggest breakthroughs for the commission came about because of the Counselman case. This case upheld the power of a grand jury to summon individuals and corporations before legal bodies. [15] Before this precedent existed under the law, railroads could choose to ignore a summons. This left the commission powerless and ineffective. The significance of the Counselman case for the ICC, stemmed from its own need to hold hearings and compel witnesses to appear. The ICC received greater authority through the passage of the Elkins Act of 1903 (which abolished secret shipping rates) and the Hepburn Act (which brought the petroleum and sleeping car business under ICC control.) [16]

The empowering of the ICC took many years to achieve. The agency struggled to gain authority and enforcement rights. The formation of the ICC would not have occurred if the railroad industry had voluntarily policed itself. However, the possibility of reaching agreement between so many lines proved unlikely. The early railroad pools were one example of cooperation within the industry, but these benefited only the railroads themselves and were discriminatory. As time and circumstances evolved, many of our lawmakers realized that meaningful transportation reform was necessary. In the next chapter, the full spectrum of railroad opposition is examined. Included in these observations is the political and economic motivation for this opposition.

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13. Wilner N. Frank, "Railroads in the 20th century: Pride, Principle, determination," *The Railway Age Magazine*, December 1999.

14. Ibid.

15. 142 U.S. 457.

16. *Seventeenth Annual Reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission*, December 15, 1903 (Washington: Government Printing Office 1903) pp. 7-13. / *Twenty-second Annual Report of the Interstate Commerce Commission*, December 24, 1908, Appendix B, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1909) pp. 129-228.

Chapter II

OPPOSITION TO RAILROADS

The Grange Movement in Rural America

Farmers in the late 1860s found themselves between a rock and a hard place. They were being squeezed on one side by rising costs for equipment and supplies and on the other side by the railroads with inflated shipping rates and unfair agreements. In reaction to these market forces, Oliver Kelley founded the Grange movement in 1867. The Grange movement used various tactics, including favorable market strategies, to promote cooperation among farmers. They applied political pressure through Congress to pass the "Grange laws" which were passed to protect farmers from discrimination by railroads and large businesses. Although the Grange laws were considered constitutional, the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific Railroad Company vs. the State of Illinois* weakened the Granger reform movement. After a political solution became impracticable, the Grange turned to a collective buying approach in an effort to cut costs to farmers. For the Midwestern farmer, the high cost of machinery remained a constant sore spot. In response to these needs, the Grange contracted with manufacturers to supply equipment at competitive prices.

The Populists

The instability brought on by the economic troubles of the 1870s left American agriculture in a depressed state. Farmers also suffered from droughts and poor weather conditions during these years. Crop yields dropped dramatically for some commodities, adding to the deteriorating state of affairs. Under this environment, dissatisfaction with the two-party system reached a new pinnacle. Those in the rural areas of the country wanted solutions to their problems, not just empty rhetoric. To address their grievances, some in the rural

areas turned to the Farmers Alliance. The platform of the Farmers Alliance called for railroad regulation, tax reforms, and unlimited silver coinage [17]

The Presidential campaign of 1892 opened a door for the Populist Party when neither major party supported a "Free Silver" plank in their platforms. Using the "Free Silver" issue as a catalyst, the Populists were able to put together a coalition of Midwestern and Southern farmers, labor groups, and reformers. The Populists Party Platform of 1892 called for the nationalization of U.S. railroads and telegraphs, a progressive income tax, the election of U.S. Senators, an eight-hour day, and the inflation of U. S. currency. It also supported the coinage of silver at a rate of sixteen ounces of silver to one ounce of gold. [18]

Nineteenth Century Business Philosophy

Two major philosophies would play a major role in the development of business attitudes in the Victorian era. The first of these is "Social Darwinism." Many business leaders believed in the Darwinian principle of "Survival of the Fittest," which implied that only those of higher classes and those with exceptional talent were capable of leadership positions. The second major philosophy embraced the "Free Labor" movement (a Republican concept focusing on the Protestant work ethic and individual responsibility associated with honest toil.) Below is a statement from Abraham Lincoln, a strong proponent of "Free Labor:

> The prudent penniless beginner in the world, labors for wages awhile, saves a surplus to buy tools or land, for himself; then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This, say its advocates, is free labor—the just and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way for all—gives hope to all, and energy, and progress, and improvement of conditions to all. If any continue through life in the condition of a hired laborer, it is not the fault of the system, but because of either

17. *Proceedings of the Iowa Farmer's Alliance, At Its Annual Meeting Held at Des Moines, Iowa, 1890, Together with the Constitutions of the State and Subordinate Alliance* (Des Moines: Homestead Company, 1890) Kansas State Historical Society, GL, 329.84.

18. *The Speech of William J. Bryan, Democratic Nominee for President, Delivered at Notification Meeting Madison Square Garden*, New York, August 12, 1896, Kansas State Historical Society, GL 329.84 Pam. * Note, the Populists Party Platforms in 1892 & 1896 varied only slightly in their major planks.

> a dependent nature which prefers it, or improvidence, folly, or singular misfortune. [19]

Another proponent of the movement, Horace Greeley, wrote the following concerning the principle of "Free Labor":

> The world is full of people who can't imagine why they don't prosper like their neighbors, when the real obstacle is not in banks nor tariffs, in bad public policy nor hard times, but in their own extravagance and needless ostentation. [20]

The ideas of self-determination and individualism are prominent themes in nineteenth century literature. These factors had some bearing on a person's financial success in America, but other considerations were equally important. In America, we like to think that anyone can rise above class barriers. However, from a cultural prospective this was not always possible. In this period, the social class a person was born into had a huge determining effect on what he or she could achieve in a lifetime. Discrimination and class prejudice based on race existed, not only in the South, but also throughout the nation. If you were of the wrong color or wrong ethnic background, your chances for success were greatly reduced. During this time, women could not enter professional careers with a few exceptions.

An excerpt from a letter to George Pullman dated September 23, 1890 illustrates this point. The contents of the letter relate to the ethnic make up and the number of Pullman workers. The letter also contains description and work characteristics of each group. Under the group designation "Irish" are listed the following comments: "Never a desirable element here. We may have been unfortunate in our allotment. They control all politics here, as elsewhere in Chicago." [21]

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19. Basler P. Roy ed. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. III, Address Before Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Milwaukee Wisconsin, September 30, 1859 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press 1953pp. 478-479.

20. *Greeley Horace, Hints Toward Reforms, in Lectures, Addresses, and Other Writings* (New York: Harper & Brothers 1850) p. 326.

21. *Employee Demographics, Letter to George M. Pullman, Public Relations History File* (Chicago: Newberry Library)September 22, 1890)Box 1, Folder 20.

Stricter Discipline on U.S. Railroads

As accidents continued to escalate and drive up costs on American railroads, new methods were developed to rate and evaluate employees. Beginning in early 1890s, many railroads implemented the "Brown System." The inventor of the system was George R. Brown, a superintendent for the Fall Brook Railroad. [22] Under the "Brown System," records were kept for each employee. When a new employee began service with a railroad line, he started with a clean record. If infractions of the rules occurred, they were recorded on the employee's work history. After a given number of infractions, a verbal warning was issued. If infractions continued, employment was terminated. Overall the system worked quite well. It also gave a degree of confidentiality to both workers and management.

Blacklisting

The practice of blacklisting railroad employees became a standard operating procedure on American railroads during this period. Blacklisting is a process whereby an employee is barred form further employment with a company or throughout an entire system. Lists were made up of terminated employees and circulated between district superintendents and competitive railroads. By the beginning of the 1890s, discharged employees were given clearance papers. These papers contained vital information on the employees work history and reasons for their departure from the company. Upon applying to a different division or railway competitor, the employees would be asked to furnish their clearance papers.

The practice of blacklisting was unfair to many workers. When employees showed gross negligence to their duties or displayed insubordination or drunkenness, there was reasonable justification for their dismissal and removal from a particular occupation. However, many employees were unjustifiably fired and kept from further employment due to their involvement with unions. After the

Pullman Strike, the company would not take back many of its former employees. These former employees were left in a state of total exhaustion and near starvation. Governor John Altgeld of Illinois toured the town of Pullman after the strike and found conditions there to be deplorable. He then asked George Pullman for assistance to these displaced workers. However, Pullman's response remained non-committal. [23]

Yellow Dog Contracts

One of the oldest tools used to limit unions from forming and growing in certain industries, was the "Yellow Dog Contract." These contracts prohibited employees from joining unions. In most places, they were issued as a condition of employment. If employees involved themselves with a union, they faced the possibility of immediate termination. Later, these types of contracts would become illegal through changes under the law. Nevertheless, these agreements served as a huge deterrent by blocking personal involvement in union organizations. One important note from the Pullman strike: after the strike had ended, those workers retained by Pullman were required to have no connections with the American Railway Union or any similar unions. [24]

In an important watershed case before the court in 1894 (*Platt vs. Philadelphia & RR Company*,) the legality of "Yellow Dog" contracts was put to the test. In this particular case, receivers of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad required all employees to resign their memberships in the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. The union brought suit against the railroad to prohibit the installation of this action. In a stunning reversal of positions, Richard Olney issues a brief in support of the Brotherhood. He stated his support in the following statement:

> Whatever else may remain for the future to determine, it must now be regarded as substantially settled that the mass of wage earners

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22. *The World's Work Magazine*, November 1903 (New York: Doubleday. Page & Company)p.4152

23. Altgeld P. John, *Live Questions* (Chicago: GEO. S. Bowen & Sons Publisher's Agents 1899)pp. 421-423.

24. *Report On The Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Chicago: Government Printing Office 1895)pp. xxvi-xxvii.

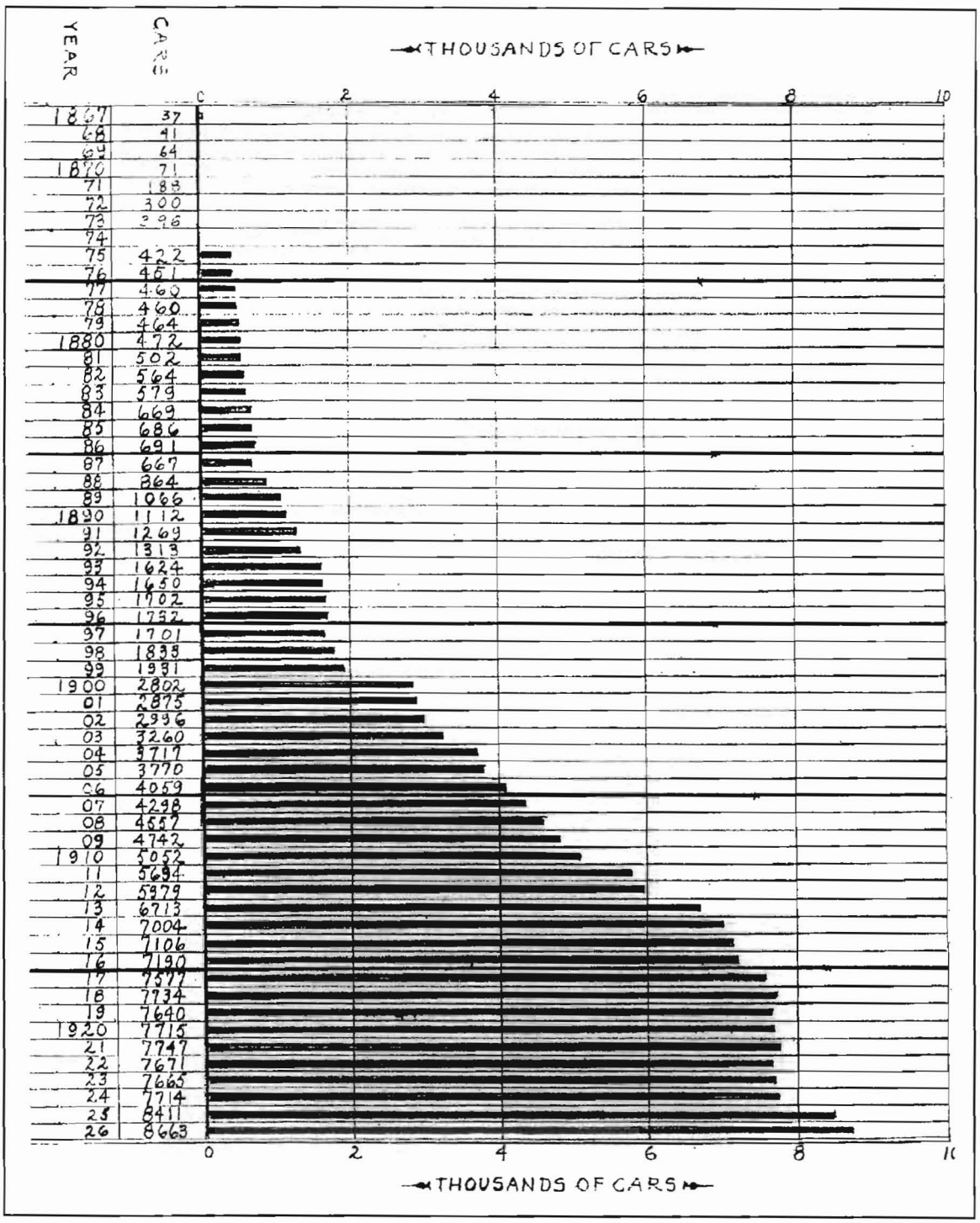
> can no longer be dealt with by capital as so many isolated units. The time has passed when the individual workman is called upon to pit his feeble strength against the might of organized capital. Organized labor now confronts organized capital...and the burring question of modern times is how shall the ever-recurring controversies between them be adjusted and terminated. If the combatants are left to fight out their battles between themselves by the ordinary agencies, nothing is more certain then that each will inflict incalculable injury upon the other; while whichever may triumph, will have won a victory only less disastrous and less regrettable than defeat. [25]

In order to understand the Pullman strike and boycott, an explanation of business conditions is necessary. By 1890 the Pullman Company was producing large quantities of railroad equipment in all classes. (The chart below illustrates this). This gave the company a huge advantage in the rail market. The next few chapters are an in-depth exploration of the town of Pullman and its importance in the Pullman legacy as well as its manufacturing facilities. Also presented, is a discussion on the company's influence on the railroad industry and the city of Chicago. Included is an explanation of the depression of 1893 which served as a primary stimulus for the events that happened later. Finally, the focus is on the developments and events that led to a worsening economy.

25. *Thomas C. Platt vs. Philadelphia Railroad Co.*

GRAPH I

SYSTEM WIDE CAR PRODUCTION PULLMAN COMPANY 1867-1926



The National Museum of American History Pullman Company 1867-1979
Collection # 181, Series 5, Box3, Folder 20

Chapter III

THE MAKING OF GEORGE PULLMAN

George Pullman learned the value of hard work and determination early in life. He began his career in business by working in his uncle's store. George came from a humble background. Later in his life, he would be portrayed as coming from a poverty stricken family. This description is completely inaccurate and was put forth by a sensationalist press wanting to illustrate a rags-to-riches story line to their readership. [26]

Seeking out his fortune, George Pullman came to Chicago in 1855. He immediately became successful in the mud-jacking business. George had learned this trade from his father Lewis Pullman and entered the business in Chicago at an opportune time. During this period, the city of Chicago was experiencing massive growth and development. In order to accommodate a new sewage system, hornes and business properties were raised up to the new street level. Pullman's company would insert large jacks underneath the buildings and in unison slowly inching the structure to the desired height. Using this technique, Pullman obtained some lucrative contracts and raised some of the largest buildings in Chicago that weighed many tons each.[27]

From 1859 to 1863, George Pullman initiated a new profession as a sleeping car builder. His designs appeared on the Chicago & Alton and Galena Railroads.[28] His first complete car "The Pioneer" came online in 1865 receiving many accolades from the traveling public. Its introduction was a huge success. (A Pullman car was a coach by day converting to a sleeper at night. It had a retractable seat and a fold down berth). As time passed and the business grew, the Pullman Palace Car Company name became associated with luxury and fine accoutrements. When demand for the new cars reached new heights by the late 1870s, George Pullman began looking for a site to accommodate a larger

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26. Robert, Adamson, "A Story of Poverty, Effort, Finally Gigantic Success and Power," *Atlanta Constitution*, Wednesday, October 20, 1897, Series 1, Box 10, Special Collections, Chicago Public Library.

27. *The Atlanta Journal*, Tuesday Evening October 19, 1897, Public Relations History File, Newspaper Clippings 1894-1897, Newberry Library Chicago, Box 1 Folder 60.

production facility. To fulfill this need, land was purchased just south of Chicago near the village of Hyde Park.

THE PULLMAN PALACE CAR COMPANY

The completion of the new production facilities in 1881 opened up a new era for the Pullman Company. In order to achieve his goal, George Pullman had to attract additional investors to his company. The Pullman Company offered stock to selected investors and later to the general public. This important step took some of the control away from George Pullman. Pullman remained the CEO of the company but controlled only one-fifth of the stock by the time of his death in 1897. [29] George Pullman had a board of directors to appease, but he was clearly the driving force behind the company. He also knew how to forge alliances and quiet competitors.

A case which illustrates this point concerns a patent infringement by the Wagner Palace Car Company. Henry Howard Sessions designed the Vestibule Car for Pullman in 1887. [30] The Vestibule Car incorporated a wraparound design with accordion-type bellows that allowed cars to be coupled together to shut out the elements. This design was a great improvement because it allowed passengers to pass from coach to coach without stepping on open platforms. This safety feature and a reduction in noise levels made these cars very popular. The Wagner Company copied Sessions' design and began running them on the New York Central Railroad. [31] The Pullman Company took this case to court and won a restraining order against the Wagner Company. Wagner had to change its design at considerable cost and effort. The restraining order stayed in effect until 1892 when the Pullman patent expired. The patent infringement only deepened the rivalry between these two companies until 1899, when The Pullman Company bought out the Wagner Palace Car Company.

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28. *Topeka Daily Capitol*, October 20, 1897 p. 1.
29. "Gorge Pullman Dies Suddenly," *Atlanta Constitution*, Wednesday October 20. 1897, Pullman Company Public Relations History File, Chicago: Newberry Library, Box 1, and Folder 60.
30. *Railroad Gazette*, March 2, 1894, p. 153. May 25, 1894, p. 371.
31. *The Railroad Gazette*, March 9, 1894, p. 173.

The Pullman Shops

The Pullman shop complex encompassed a huge expanse of real estate. The northern edge of the property began at 103rd street and stretched south to 111th street. The western boundary ran from the Illinois Central tracks eastward to Lake Calumet. The main administrative offices were located in the tower building, a beautiful red brick edifice that graced the surrounding area. Directly west of the tower building sat Lake Vista, a picturesque setting for the 5,223 employees that labored on the Pullman property in 1890. (A total of 3,782 employees worked in the car works). [32]

The main production facilities at Pullman contained some of the following departments: construction bays, erection facilities, wood machine shop, freight car construction, hammer and blacksmith shops, a cabinet shop, finish department, and an upholstering department. Situated near the Pullman factory complex sat the Allen Paper Wheel Company and the Union Foundry. The Pullman property also supported a gas works and lumberyard, water tower, power plant, and shipping track. The Auto Body Plant began production in 1920, and the Mechanical Wheel Foundry began in 1923. By the early 1920s, the Chicago Pullman facility had reached an output of six passenger cars a day. [33]

Work in the Pullman complex was undertaken by separate departments. The new car construction department sold and constructed special purchases for railroads and private individuals. During the company's history, anything from the freight and refrigerator car to the private car for the rich and famous was constructed. In the leasing department, equipment was painstakingly maintained for railroad clients. At all times, large numbers of cars awaited repair at the Chicago facility. The types of cars leased could be anything from freight cars to luxury lounges and sleepers. Each individual railroad would make a separate

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32. *A Classification of Workers at Pullman*, September 22, 1890, Pullman Company Public Relations History File, Chicago: Newberry Library, Box 1, Folder 20.

33. *The Pullman Company Manufacturing Department: Some Interesting Notes And Views Of The Pullman Car Works Located At Pullman Chicago* (no date given) Pullman Company Manufacturing Department, Chicago: Newberry Library, Box 2, Folder 105.

lease agreement with the Pullman Company. As part of that agreement, the railroad agreed to pay a mileage charge of approximately two cents per mile. In return, the Pullman Company maintained the equipment to operating standards. The company had an assortment of leasing options ranging from ten to twenty-five years. After completion of the lease, the railroad received ownership of the car.

The innovative financial programs were not the only hallmarks of Pullman creativity and talent. The Pullman Company also excelled in technological advances, both in patent development and industrial application. The company always tried to incorporate the latest tools and machinery into their assembly processes. When the Chicago facility came online in 1881, Pullman needed a power source to provide physical energy to the production equipment along with heat for the buildings in the wintertime. To facilitate this goal, George Pullman purchased the Corliss Steam Engine. This massive engine had been a showcase of modern technology during the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876. The Corliss engine cost the Pullman Company $130,000, and it required thirty-five railcars to transport it to Chicago. [34] A special building had to be constructed to house this massive engine.

In order to assure a quick movement of work throughout the Pullman facility, a special assembly line process was developed. Railroad cars are long and heavy requiring special care. Cars had to move from one assembly point to the next. To accomplish this goal, the Pullman Company used a transfer table whereby the work could be completed in one bay and then slid out into the next for further fitting and processing. This movement of work continued until the car reached the paint shop, its final stop before completion. [35]

Through the years, the Pullman Company had to adapt to new changes in the railroad industry. One of the biggest changes took place in 1907 when the company switched from its traditional wooden design to the heavier and longer

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34. *The Smithsonian: 150 Years of Adventure, Discovery and Wonder.* www.150.si.edu/intro.htm

35. Mike Wagenback, Suite Superintendent Pullman, "Private Tour Of Pullman," interview by David Swindell, August 3, 2001.

all-metal prototypes. This came about through changes in railroad regulations. In order to accommodate the longer cars, new buildings had to be constructed and existing buildings needed to be lengthened. During this transition, many of the older buildings became unusable and were converted into storage facilities or other uses. [36] Despite these changes, the Pullman shop complex continued to serve the railroad community for many years to come. In 1982, after a century of use, the Pullman Company finally closed its doors on 111th Street, thus ending a momentous chapter in railroad history.

The Town of Pullman

When George Pullman asked Spencer Beman and Nathan Barrett to design the town of Pullman, Illinois, he envisioned a clean and livable town. He saw a town far from the overcrowded slums and dirty streets of the South Chicago neighborhood. George Pullman also wanted a workforce that was industrious, committed, and sober. He wanted the town to be a showplace, a place of beauty. Flowers and green lawns were to adorn the many well-kept yards. Parks and open spaces would provide places for walks and relaxation. In addition, leisure pursuits and outlets for employees were encouraged. To accomplish this goal, an athletic club was established. Concerts and special performances provided entertainment to its residents. The Pullman band came to be known for its excellence and showmanship performing for the residents on many occasions. The band even traveled outside Pullman giving concerts throughout the U.S.

Construction of the Pullman town began in 1880 and progressed steadily into the following year. This was a massive project. Hundreds of workers labored diligently at their tasks. The town of Pullman reached completion in the spring of 1882. The layout of Pullman resembled a medium-sized European city.[37] The town incorporated design features that added to the utility and self-

36. ibid.
37. Carwardine H. William, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company 1894)p. 25.

sufficiency of the community. Wide streets and lighted sidewalks conveyed a sense of orderliness and security. The town also had a beautiful square and some designated open spaces. Brick and stone were chosen as the primary construction materials, costing a considerable more amount of money than traditional wood frame types. A brick factory established near Pullman kept masons supplied with the beautiful red brick that is the trademark of the town's construction.

In the first few years of the town, a sense of euphoria surrounded the community. During its pinnacle, scholars and members of the press praised the town of Pullman as a great "Social Experiment." Many visitors came to Pullman to marvel at the wonderful attractions (especially during the Columbia Exhibition of 1893.) Despite the glamorous façade of the well-kept streets and public buildings, resentment and discontentment were smoldering beneath the surface. As economic conditions worsened at the close of 1893, the situation inside the Pullman shops intensified due to high rents, reduced wages, and layoffs. Soon the world would be shocked to hear of the conditions facing the Pullman workers. The worker paradise that was touted by the press and company publications now came under the light of scrutiny.

Description of Pullman

The central meeting place for business activities inside Pullman was the Florence Hotel. This stately structure provided lodging and comfort to the business and casual travelers. Directly to the south of the Florence Hotel stood the Arcade building. The Arcade served as pre-cursor to the modern shopping center or mall. There were numerous stores of every description, all under one roof. The Arcade also had a library (which patrons had to pay a yearly subscription to use) and a theater where performances were offered on a regular basis. To the south of the Arcade sat the stables. All private horses had to be kept at the stable. East of the stable and Arcade was the Green Stone Church. This beautiful structure graced the Pullman community with its wonderful tall spire and green serpentine walls. Further east lay the Market. At the Market,

Pullman residents bought bread, milk, meat, and other food items. In a semi-circle around each side of the market were apartments constructed for visitors to Pullman. These structures came on the scene just before the start of the Colombian Exhibition of 1893.

For the worker at Pullman, the company offered several types of accommodations for rent. The administrative homes were well-built spacious dwellings with full kitchens and roomy interiors. One of the more important administrative homes belonged to the company physician. Dr. John McLean occupied the house just adjacent to the factory's South Gate on 111th Street Dr. McLean would treat injured workers in his own home and perform minor surgeries. When a man was injured on the job, he was taken directly across the street to the doctor's home. If an operation was required, the procedure took place on the kitchen table. A beautiful sunroom sat next to the kitchen. If the patient managed to survive the surgery, he convalesced in the sunroom. [38]

The workers' row houses were much smaller, offering fewer amenities. These homes were narrow in width and offered less space. The living space inside each home remained a serious issue for large families. Often several families would subdivide a single unit. Each family would occupy a portion of the property, thus reducing the overall cost to each tenant. However, this cost-saving strategy created over-crowding. Some families even took in additional boarders to reduce costs. On the outside, space was also at a premium. These units had only a small front porch with a stoop in the front and very little space in back. For many of the residents living on the second floor of these row houses, the only entryway to their apartments was through the back alleyway.[39] Finally, the residents lamented over high rents. Rents at Pullman were between twenty to twenty-five percent higher than in the surrounding communities. In addition residents had to pay higher rates for water and natural gas.[40]

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38. *Pullman House Tour*, October 2000, Sponsored by the Historic Pullman Foundation and Pullman residents.

39 . Taylor, Roneyn, Grahan, "Satellite Cities, the Survey" *A Journal of Constructive Philanthropy*, Volume XXIX, No. 5, November 2, 1912. p. 122

40. *Report On The Chicago Strike* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895) pp. xxxv, 462, 467-468, 492-493, Inter Ocean, December 17, 1883, p. 2.

Inside The Town of Pullman

Life inside Pullman was more structured than in ordinary communities. Employees were encouraged to conduct their personal matters within a given code of conduct. Prohibitions existed against liquor consumption, fighting, and general disorderliness. A small bar inside the Florence Hotel remained the only exception to these rules. Residents were also expected to keep their apartments clean and presentable. Orderliness and composure were the hallmarks expected of a Pullman citizen.

One major drawback to living at Pullman concerned the inability of residents to buy the homes in which they lived. This policy produced much dissatisfaction and discord among Pullman employees.[41] Furthermore, residents were prohibited from making any changes or alterations to their living units without the permission of the Town Agent or Housing Director. The company's rental policies also further exacerbated employee frustrations through preferences and special considerations. Those employees living in the town of Pullman were usually the last ones to be let go in a layoff.[42] Employees could always buy homes in the surrounding communities of Roseland and Kensington. Many took advantage of that opportunity, but they were not guaranteed work in slow periods. In 1890, the ratio of employees living outside Pullman to those living inside the town represented a figure of 1,985 to 5,223 (approximately thirty-eight percent).[43] For the workers who stayed in the town of Pullman, there was a degree of comfort in knowing they would be provided work even in difficult times. However, these same employees had reservations about living in a community owned and operated by the company.

George Pullman had never intended his town to be a gift of benevolence to his workers. The town's main purpose was to turn a profit. Developers of Pullman had projected a six percent dividend for their investors. However, they

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41. Ibid. pp. xxxv-xxxvi, 504/*Chicago Herald*, February 17. 1883, p.2.

42. Report On The Chicago Strike June July 1894 (Washington: Government Printing Office)1895, p. xxxv-xxxvi, 499.

43. Doty, Duane, *A Classification of Workers at Pullman, Pullman Company Public Relations History File* (Chicago: Newberry Library)Box 1, and Folder 20.

were deeply disappointed when only a 3.82 percent return reached the shareholders.[44] With less than expected returns on town properties, George Pullman became harder to deal with on rental issues during the Pullman Strike of 1894. Pullman also did not believe in subsidizing rents for social purposes. Besides turning a profit on his investment, Pullman wanted a clean and pleasant environment where workers could be more productive and free from the negative influences of the day. All happenings in the town were reported weekly to company officials.[45] The lease agreements signed by the residents had an amendment allowing either party to cancel on short notice. In the event workers proved troublesome to the company, they were evicted promptly. The significance of these controls meant greater security for the company, yet it also meant a loss of freedom to the employee. It is quite clear from viewing the structure of the town of Pullman that paternalistic practices prevailed. George Pullman wanted his own influence and control over the town. His uncompromising attitudes would lead to a rebellion of his own employees that would have far-reaching consequences. This affected not only themselves but also the community and a nation as a whole.

One key provision that proved troublesome to the workers concerned the prohibition of alcoholic beverages in Pullman. Employees could buy beer at times from local deliverymen.[46] However, hard liquor and other liquid spirits could not be purchased. This rule remained a hardship for workers from different cultures and traditions, especially since the majority of the men at Pullman were from Europe. Listed in the table below are the numbers from different nationalities compiled by the Duane Doty Pullman Company statistician in September of 1890.

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44. *Revenue From Dwellings, Year-End Report*, July 31, 1894(Chicago: Newberry Library) Box 7, Folder 101.

45. Carwardine H. William, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publisher 1894)pp. 50-51.

46. *Testimony of Dr. John M' Lean, Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 486.

TABLE I

Nationalities At Pullman		
American	United Stated	1,738
Scandinavian		
	Sweden	967
	Norway	108
	Denmark	62
British		
	England	372
	Scotland	80
	Wales	27
	Canada	206
Germany		
	Germany	581
	Austria	39
Dutch	Holland	557
Irish	Ireland	318
French	France	56
	All Others	112
Total		5,223

What is evident from this document is the numerical advantage of Europeans over second generation Americans (3,485 to 1,738). This predominance of Europeans at Pullman explains some of the behavioral characteristics of the workforce. European workers were noted for their craftsmanship and attention to detail. They also had a strong connection to their families. Socializing for these groups included visiting neighbors and family members. Drinking at home, in restaurants, or in beer gardens was a part of their culture. With drinking establishments forbidden in Pullman (the exception being the Florence Hotel,) Europeans and many of their American neighbors took

their thirst to the adjoining town of Kensington. Their forty saloons were more than ready to indulge the men with libations and lively entertainment. Kensington developed quite a reputation during those years and was often referred to by the locals as "Bum Town." [47] It seems from this observation that Mr. Pullman's effort to limit alcohol was about as successful as his successors would be during the Prohibition Era.

One major source of discord between the company and the residents concerned the lack of self-government within the community. The town agent appointed by the company handled all the day-to-day operations. More complex matters were referred to a higher authority. This type of administration completely shut out the local residents from the decision-making process. The Pullman residents felt they had no voice. This system only further isolated and alienated the residents from the company. This would later lead to further misunderstanding and polarization of positions.

The Depression of 1893

The failure of the Baring Brothers Banking House in 1893 started a chain reaction of events that lead to a worldwide recession. To cover their losses, British speculators had to sell U.S. Securities and investments at deflated prices. At the same time, many foreign investors stopped purchasing American stocks and bonds. Many of the railroads during this period slipped into receivership. Without a ready supply of money, American railway companies found it difficult to borrow needed money to update and expand. Likewise, customers began to cancel orders, and conditions worsened throughout the country. As the recession continued to intensify, the country fell into a serious depression.

During the Depression of 1893, massive layoffs and starvation would force many Americans into a state of severe deprivation. Those fortunate enough to find work had to endure long hours at low pay. Throughout America, the working class faced terrible conditions and suffered from poor nutrition and

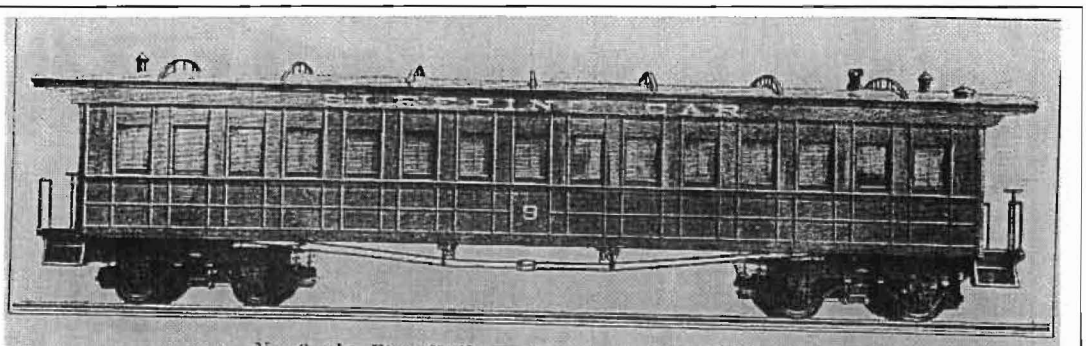
47. Mike Wagenback, Suite Superintendent Pullman, "Private Tour of Pullman," Interviewed by David

disease. Children were used for industrial labor, adding to the suffering. From a historical prospective, the Depression of 1893 ranked as one of the worst events in the nineteenth century.

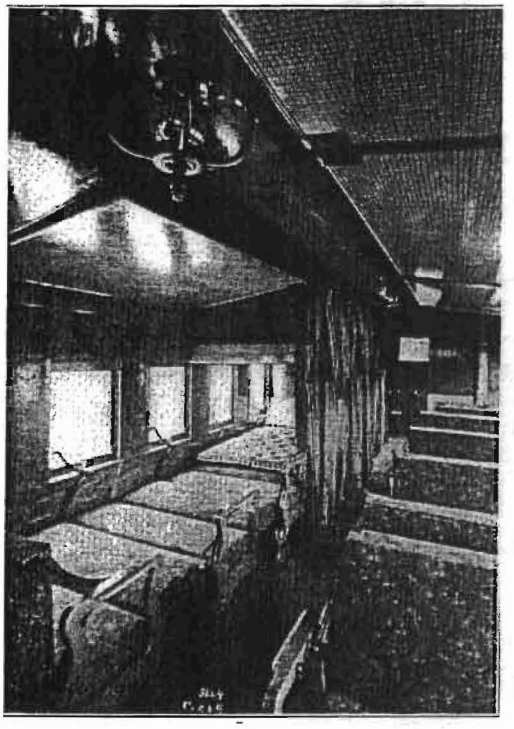
For those living in Chicago, unemployment soared after the closing of the Colombian Exhibition in the fall of 1893. Countless numbers of individuals were living in shanties or sleeping in public buildings during the winter of 1894. Relief for the poor remained marginal at best. As spring approached, the situation in Chicago intensified. There was no work for a large number of the unemployed. Starvation began to take effect. The two years leading up to the Depression of 1893 proved equally difficult for agriculture, with droughts and other adverse weather conditions adding to the problem. The corn crops of 1892 and 1893 represented a significant decrease from the bumper crop of 1891. The reported yields were 2,060,154,000 bushels in 1891, and then only 1,619,496,131 bushels for the year 1893.[48] Some Midwestern states including Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska experienced exceptional corn crop depletion. [49] These were desperate times for desperate people. These social and economic difficulties served as a powder keg that awaited only a single spark to engulf Chicago and the nation in a great conflagration. In the meantime, workers' patience was growing thin as the United States reached a new climax in Labor activism.

Swindell, August 3, 2001.

48. *Report of the Secretary of Agriculture* 1893 (Washington: government Printing Office 1894), pp 487.
49. Ibid p 479.



No. 9, the First Pullman Sleeper, built in 1858-1859



Interior of No. 9, the First Pullman

Above

Picture of the Pioneer
George Pullman's First Sleeping Car

Left

Interior View of the Pioneer

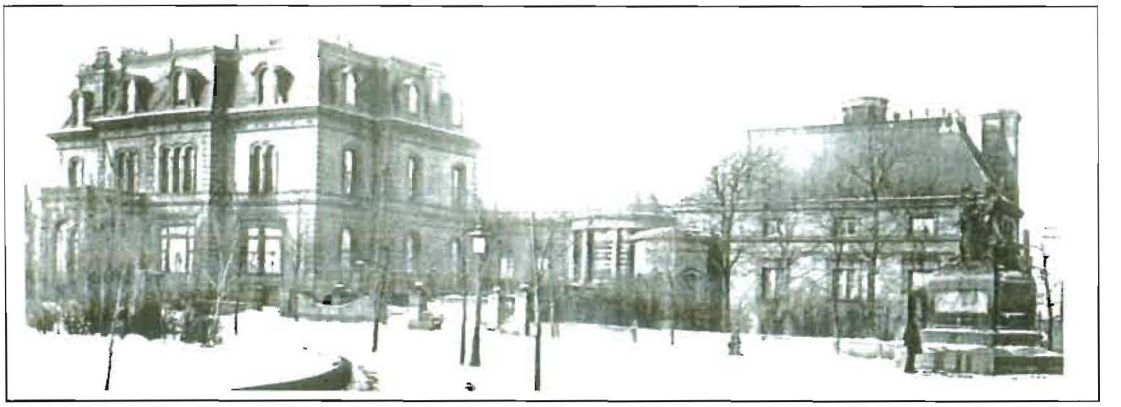
Both Pictures come from a booklet
Published by the Pullman Company
Manufacturing Department

"Some Interesting Notes and Views of
Pullman Car Works Located at
Pullman, Chicago"

Pullman Company Manufacturing
File Newberry Library Chicago
Box 2 Folder 105

The Pioneer had the added distinction of serving in the Funeral Entourage of

President Lincoln between Chicago and Springfield Illinois.

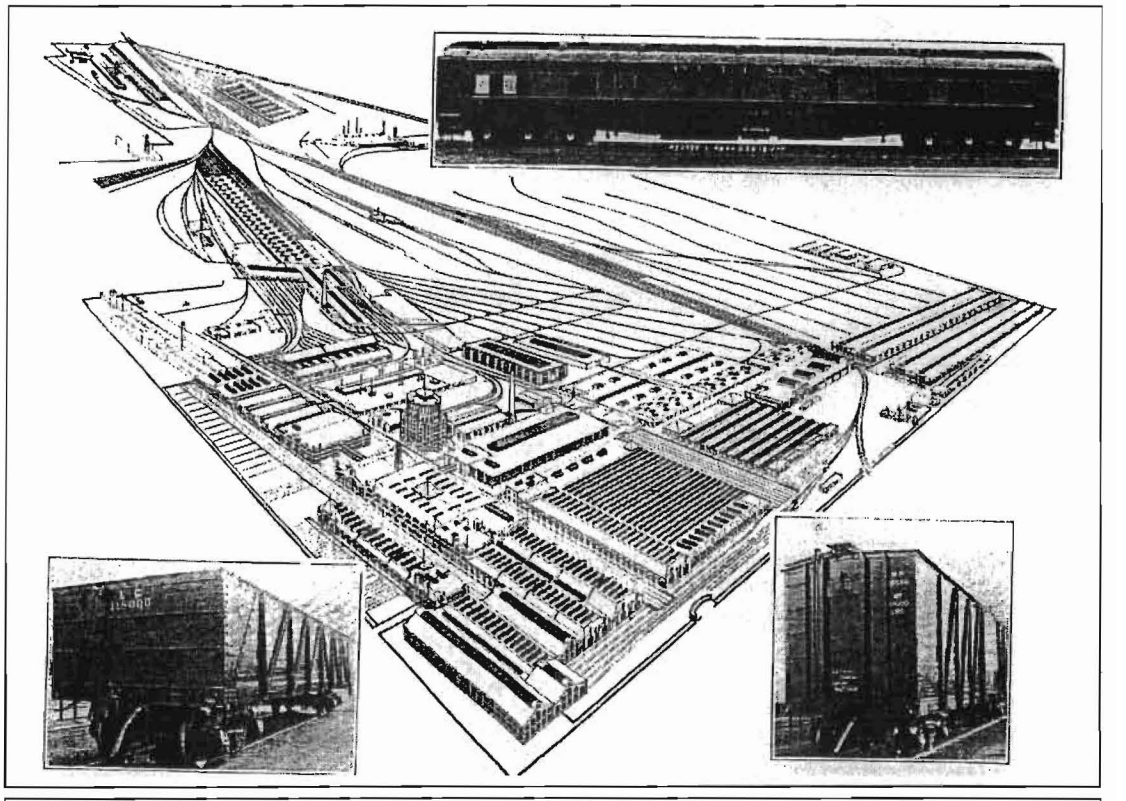


The Pullman Residence 18th and Prairie Avenue
S. S. Berman Architect
Chicago Historical Society Photo

Drawing Room of Pullman Residence

Chicago Historical Society Photo

The Pullman Shops

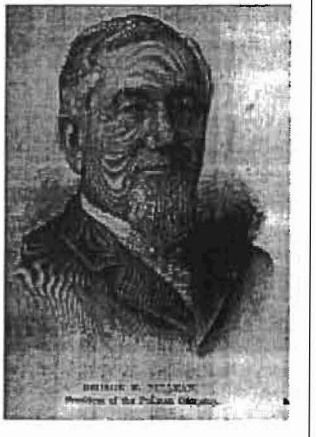


The Pullman Shop Complex, No date Given.
Taken From
"Some Interesting Notes and Views of the Pullman Car Works"
Pullman Manufacturing Department File, Newberry Library Chicago, Box 2, Folder 105

General offices of Pullman Car Works

Left

General Offices of Pullman Car Works
Source Same As Above



Left

Portrait

Of

George Pullman

Harper's weekly
July 14, 1894

Above
What remains of the Pullman GeneralOffice Complex today?

In 1998 a fire ravaged a great portion of the original structure leaving only the shell. From the picture you can see the emergency stabilization that has been done to preserve the structure.

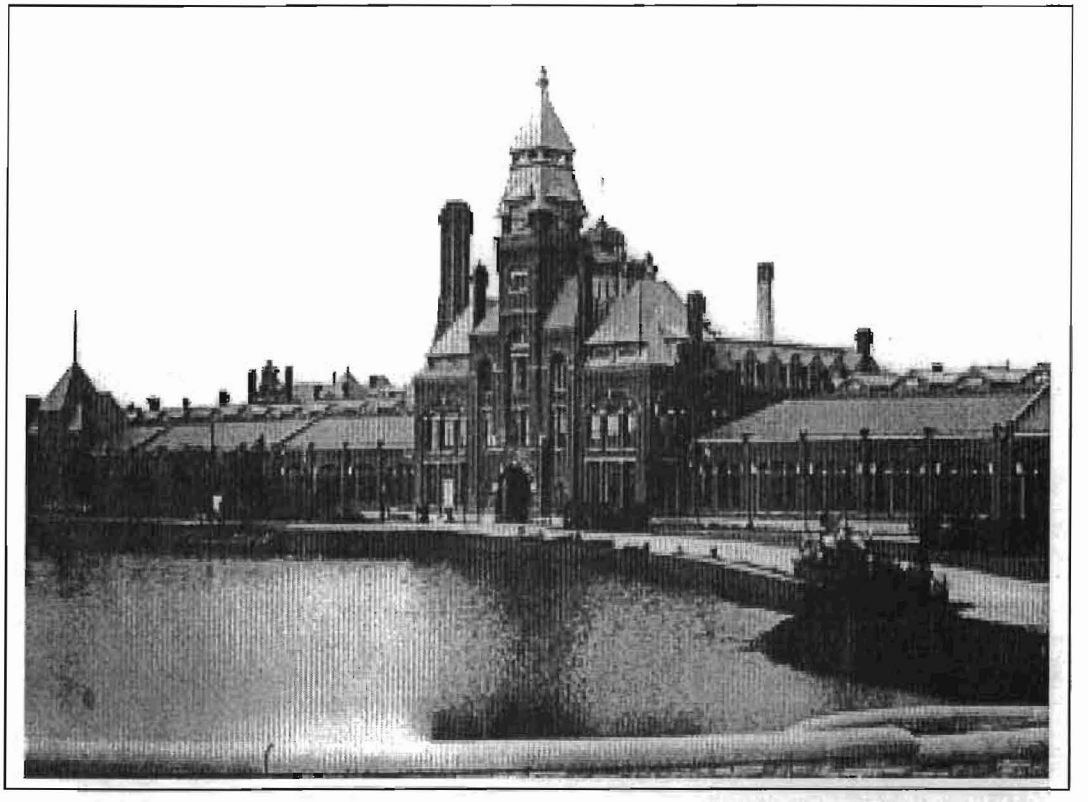
Above Top

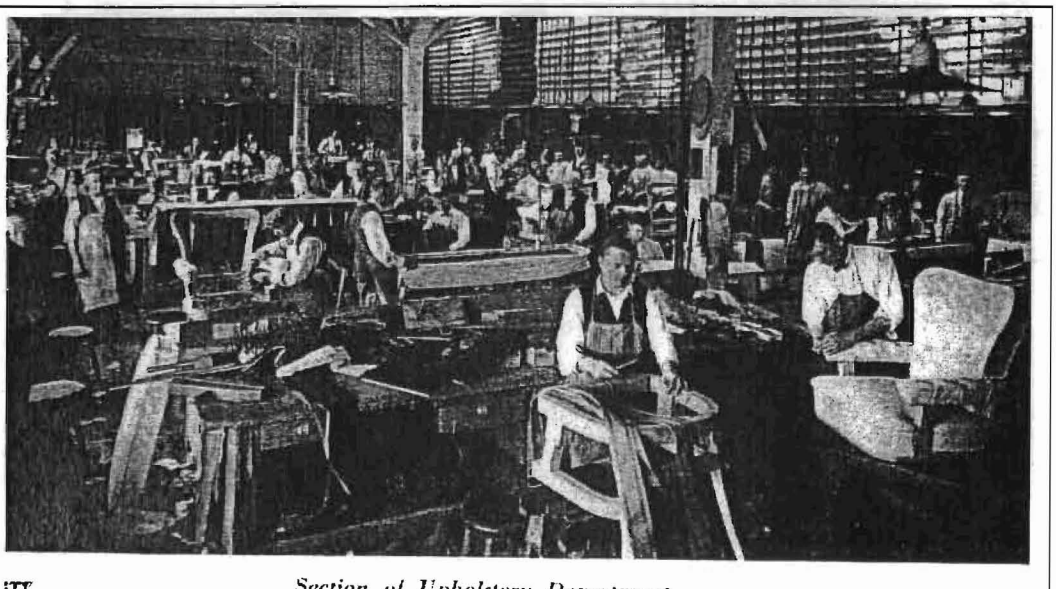
A side view of the remaining Pullman Shop Complex. Workers were in the process of applying a new roof to parts of the building. An extensive restoration will begin at some point in the coming years.

Above Second Picture

Inside view of one of the original shop buildings. The roof has been reinforced with new trusses and sheating.

Lake Vista and the Pullman Administration Building
And Tower
Historic Pullman Foundation Photo

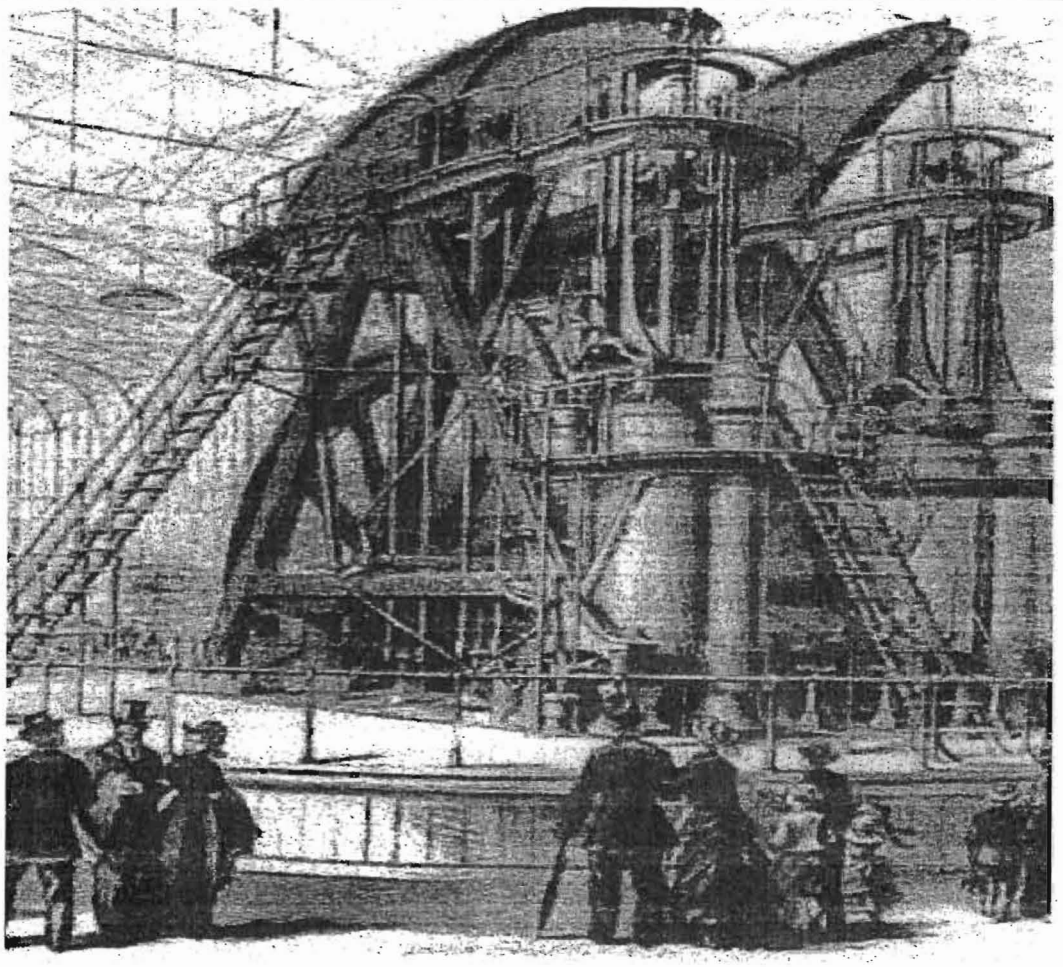


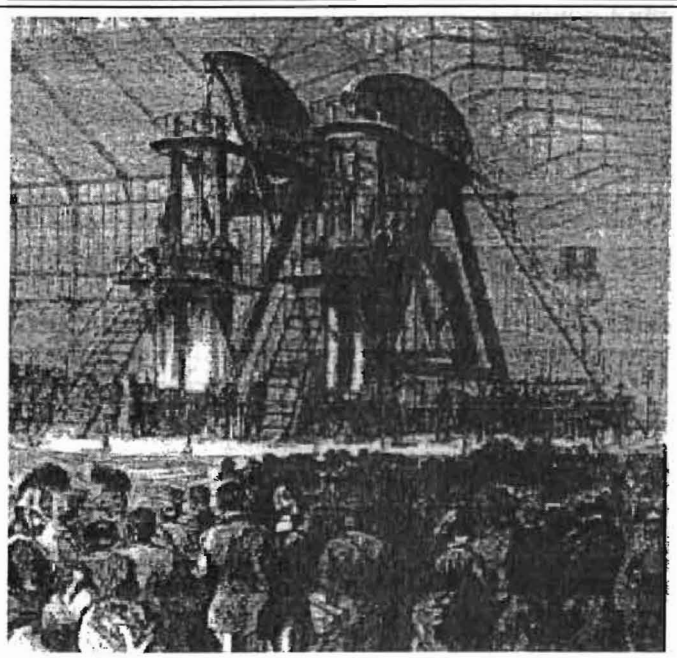


:rr *Section of Upholstery Department*

Photo Taken From
"Some Interesting Notes and Views of Pullman Car Works"
Pullman Manufacturing Department Booklet

The Corliss Steam Engine

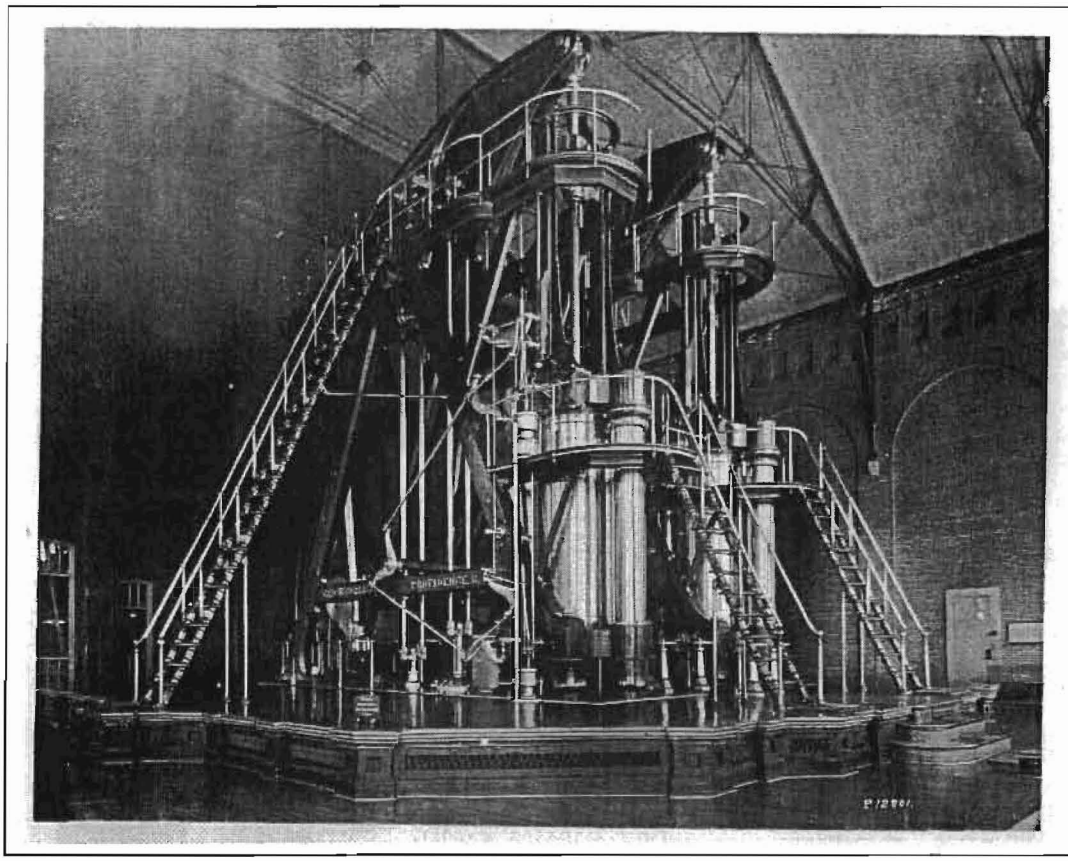




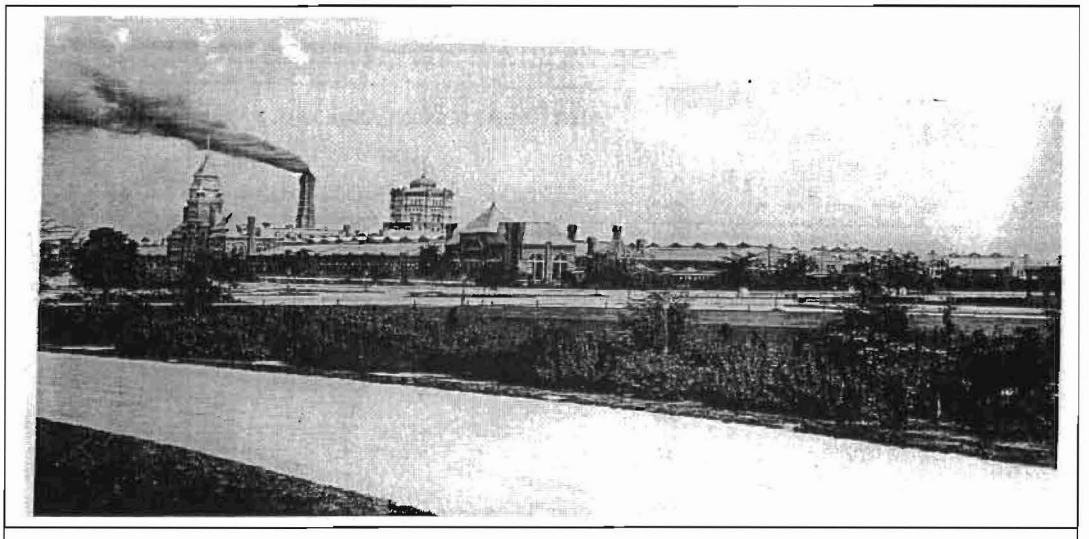
Above
A View of the Corliss Steam Engine During Philadelphia Centennial Of 1876
Photo from The University of Virginia Library

Left
President Grant and Dom Pedro Starting the Corliss Engine, From a Sketch by Theo. R. Davis
Photo from Centennial Exhibition

The Corliss Steam Engine At Pullman

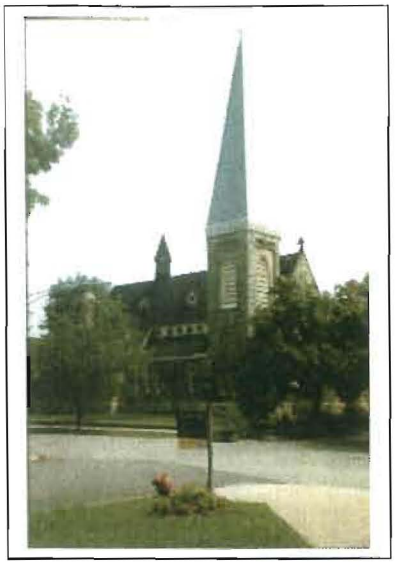


The Corliss Steam Engine in the Pullman Complex
Photo from
Special Collection Chicago Public Library



View of Pullman Shop complex Including: Powerplant Smokestack and Watertower
Photo taken from Special Collection Department Chicago Public Library

Florence Hotel Pullman



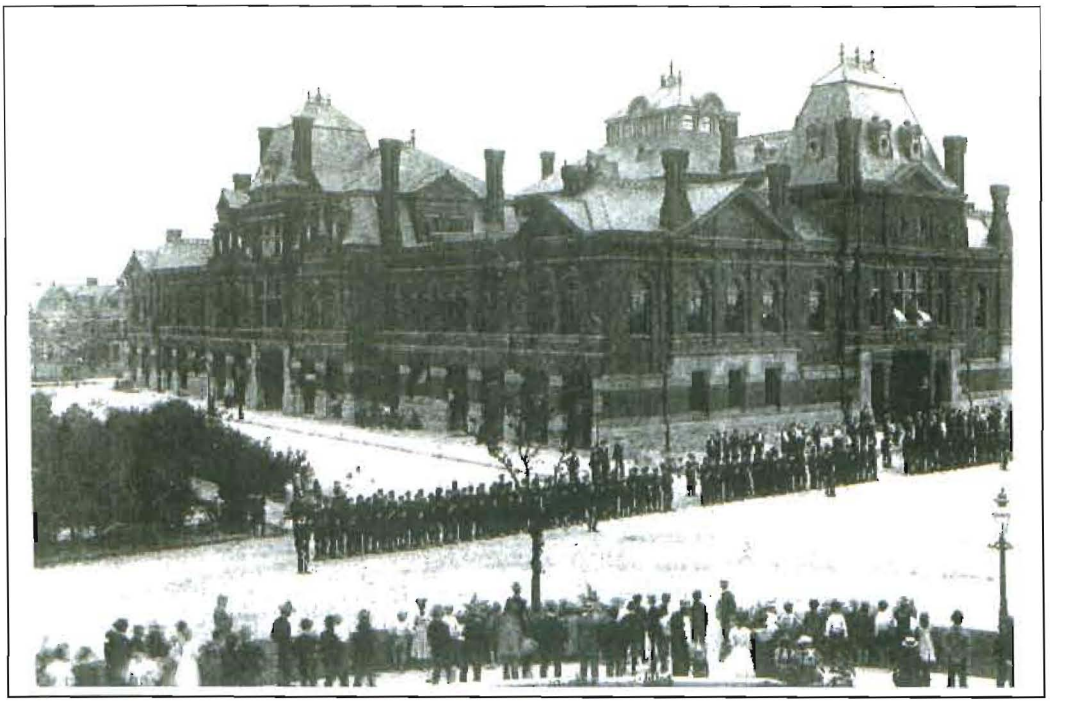
Greenstone Church Pullman

Front Desk and Lobby Florence Hotel Pullman

Fireplace HotelFlorence Pullman

Market Hall Pullman

Workers Rowhouses Pullman



The Arcade Building at Pullman with Protection of Federal Troops
Chicago Historical Society Photo

Above
Special Housing for
Guests at Pullman

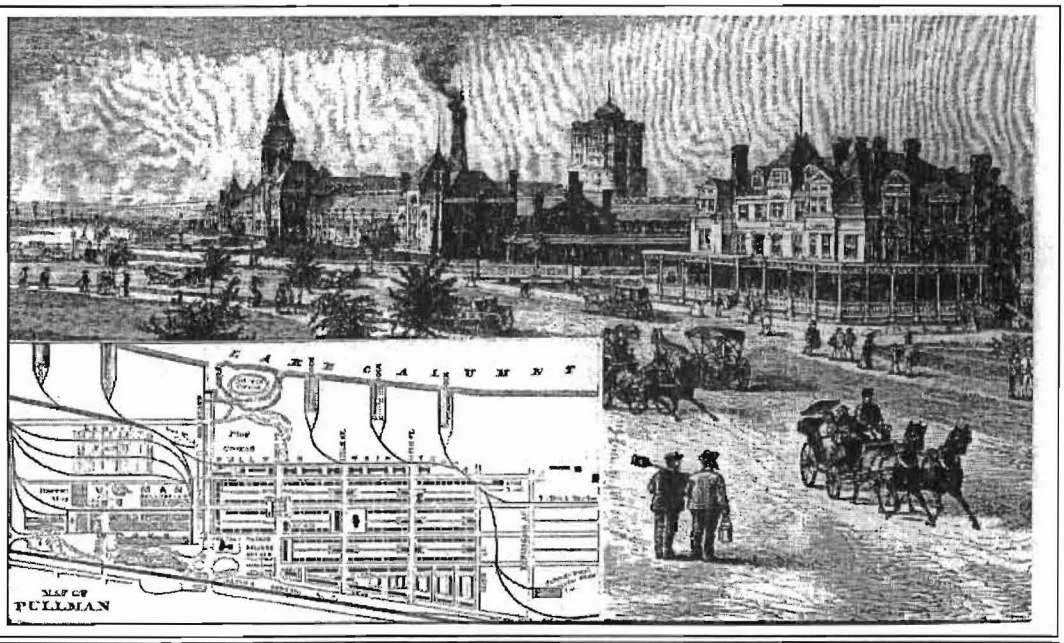
Left
Administrative Housing
Pullman

Right

Guest Housing
Constructed Prior to
the Columbian
Exposition 1893

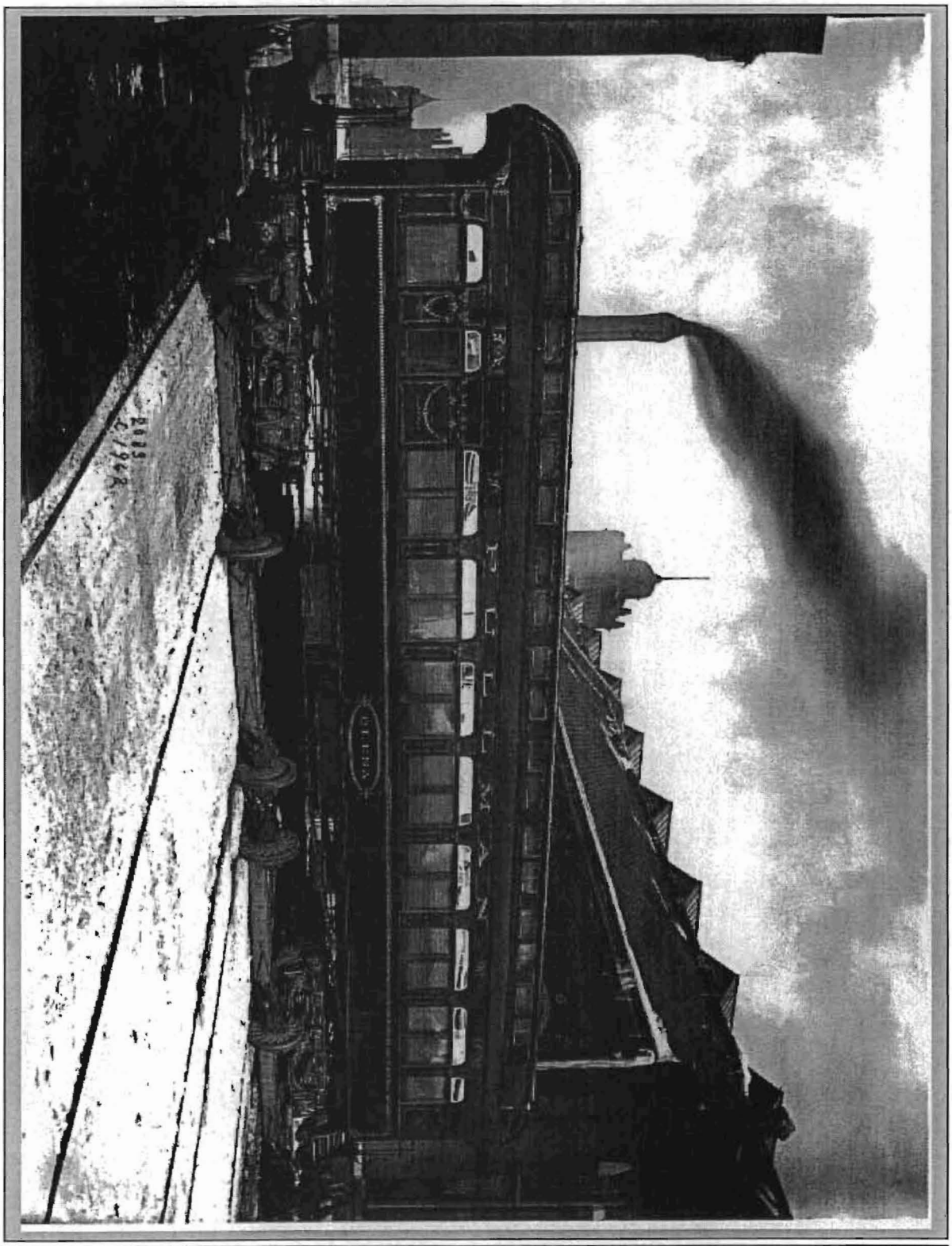
Views of Pullman

Pullman Looking West
Photo from Special Collections Chicago Public Library



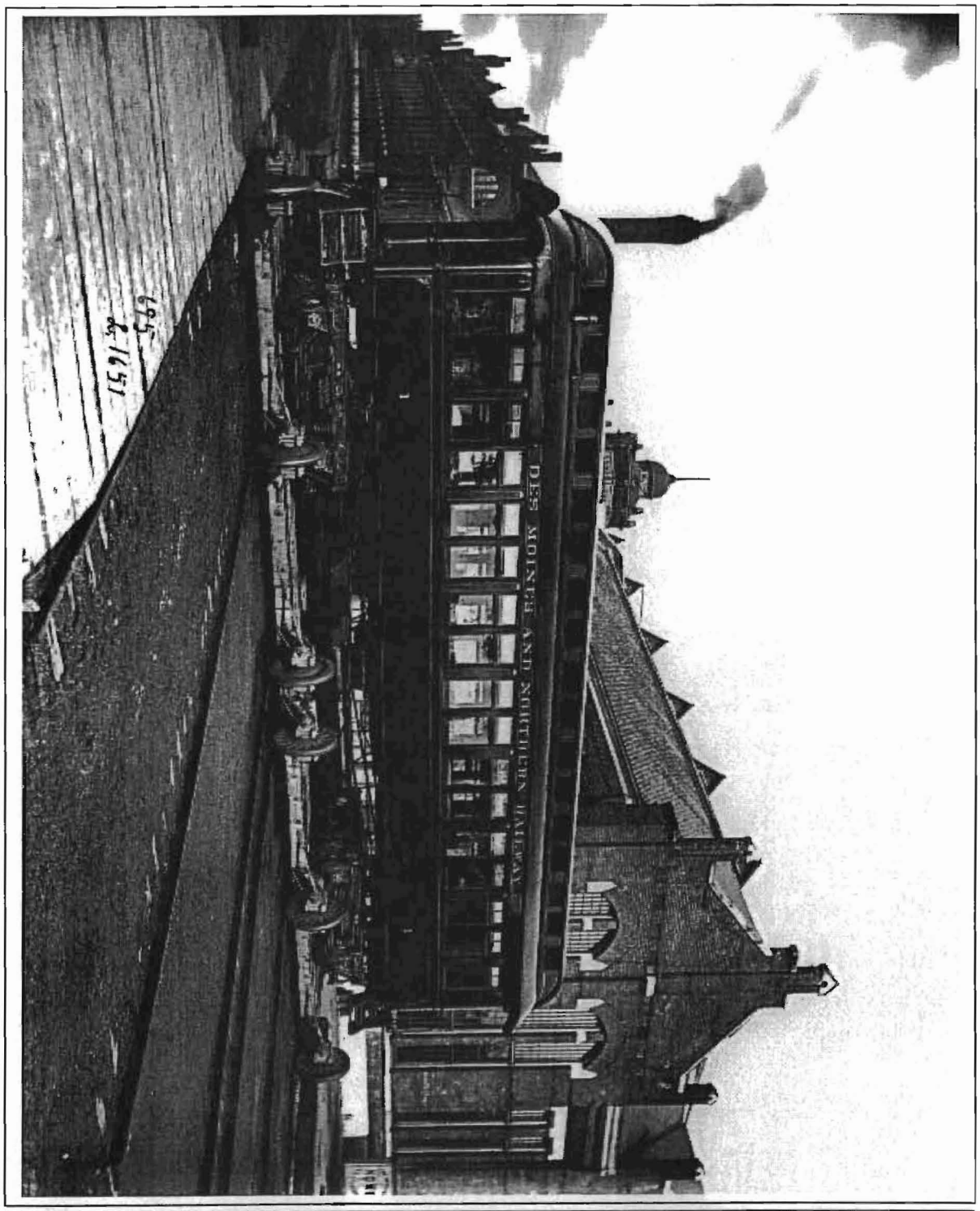
Engraving of the Town of Pullman
Harper's Monthly Magazine 1882

Northern Pacific Dinning Car
Produced at Pullman Shops 1890
Transportation Collection
Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History

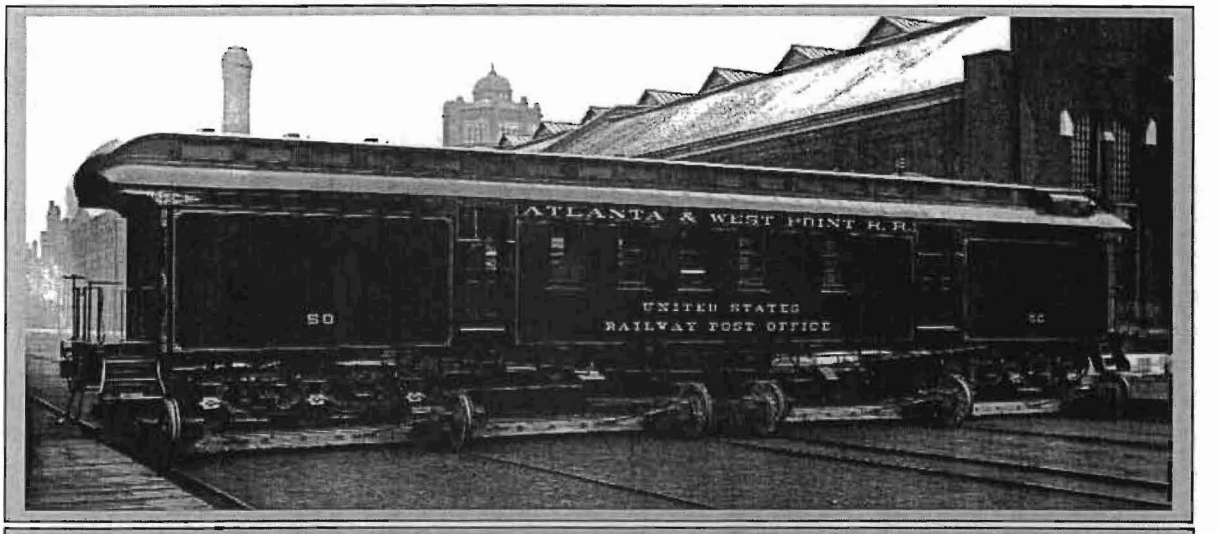


Sleeping Car Anelo, Pullman Shops 1893
Smithsonian Institution, American Museum of American History

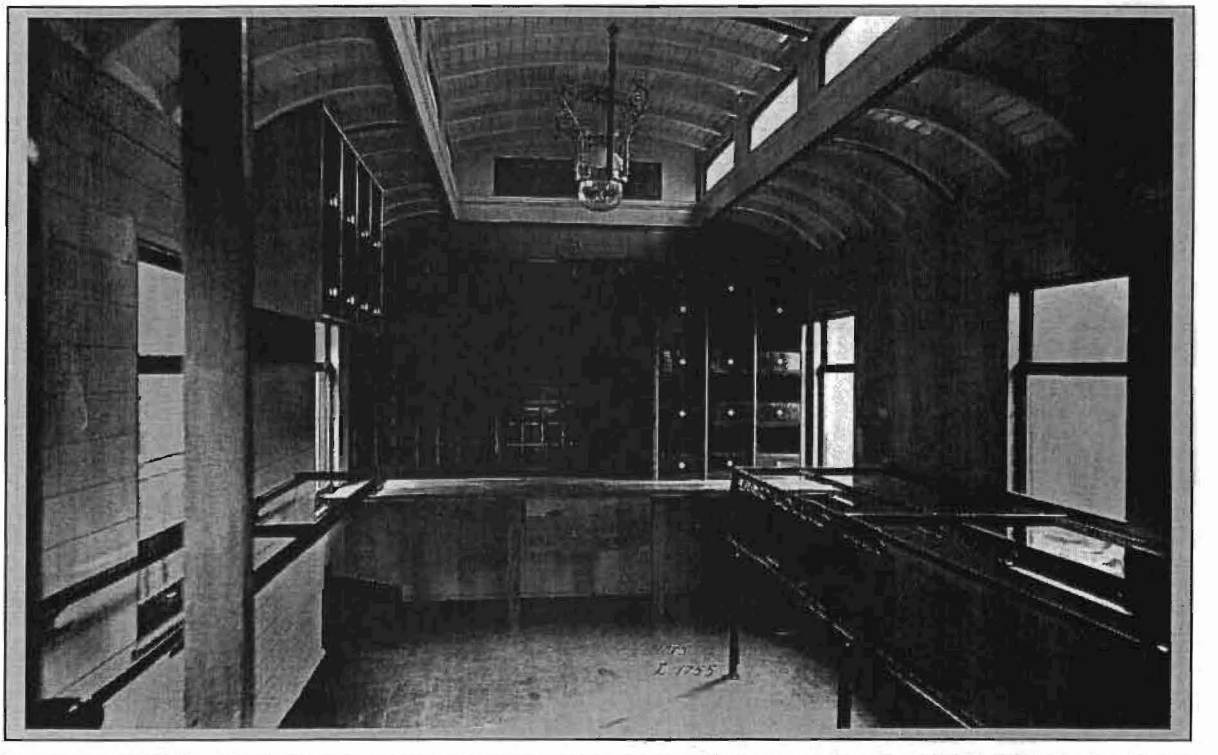
Coach Interior
Burmingham Oregon Short Line, Pullman Shops 1893
Transportation Collection, Smithsonian Institution



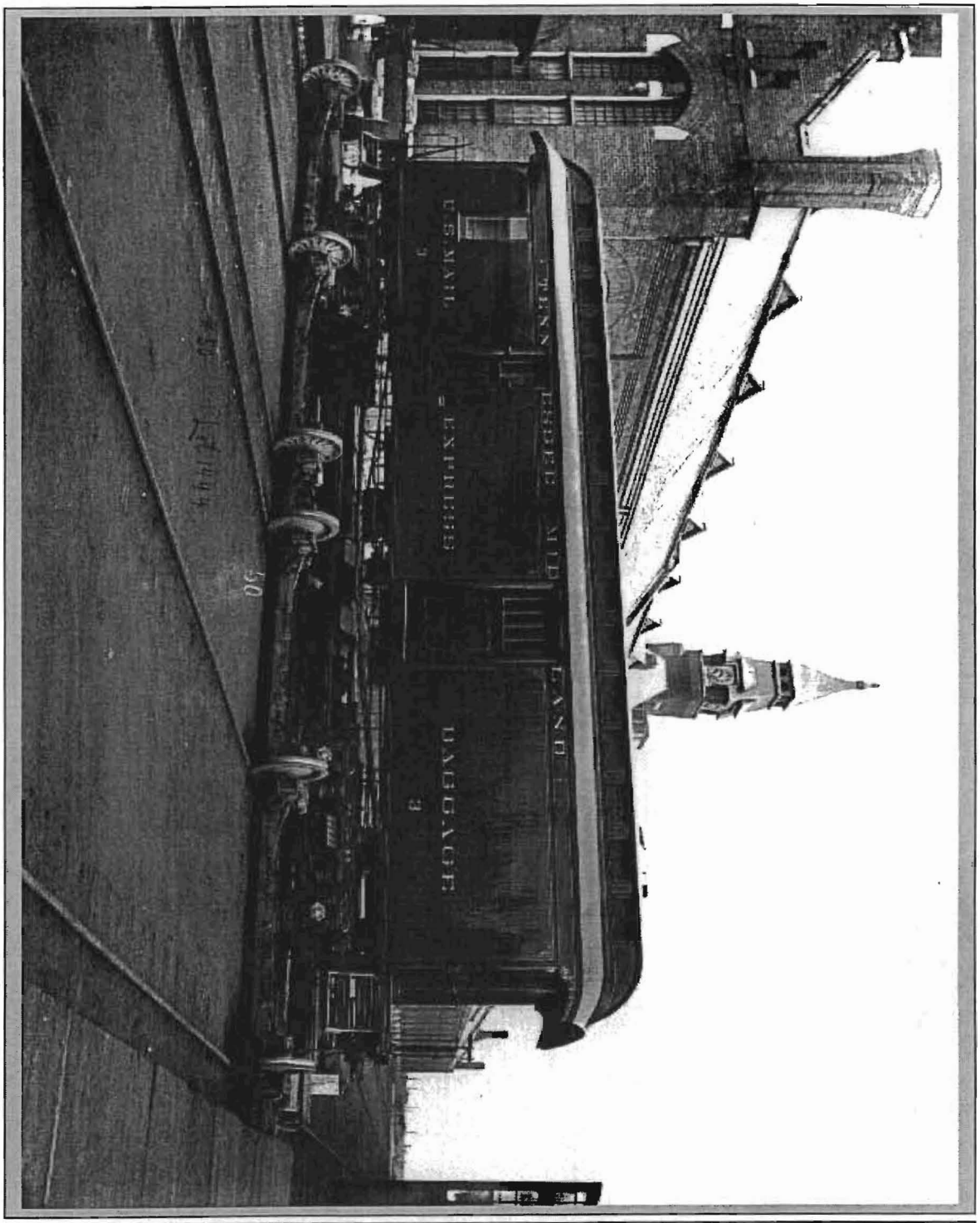
Railway Coach, Des Moines & Northern Railway
Pullman Shops 1889
Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History



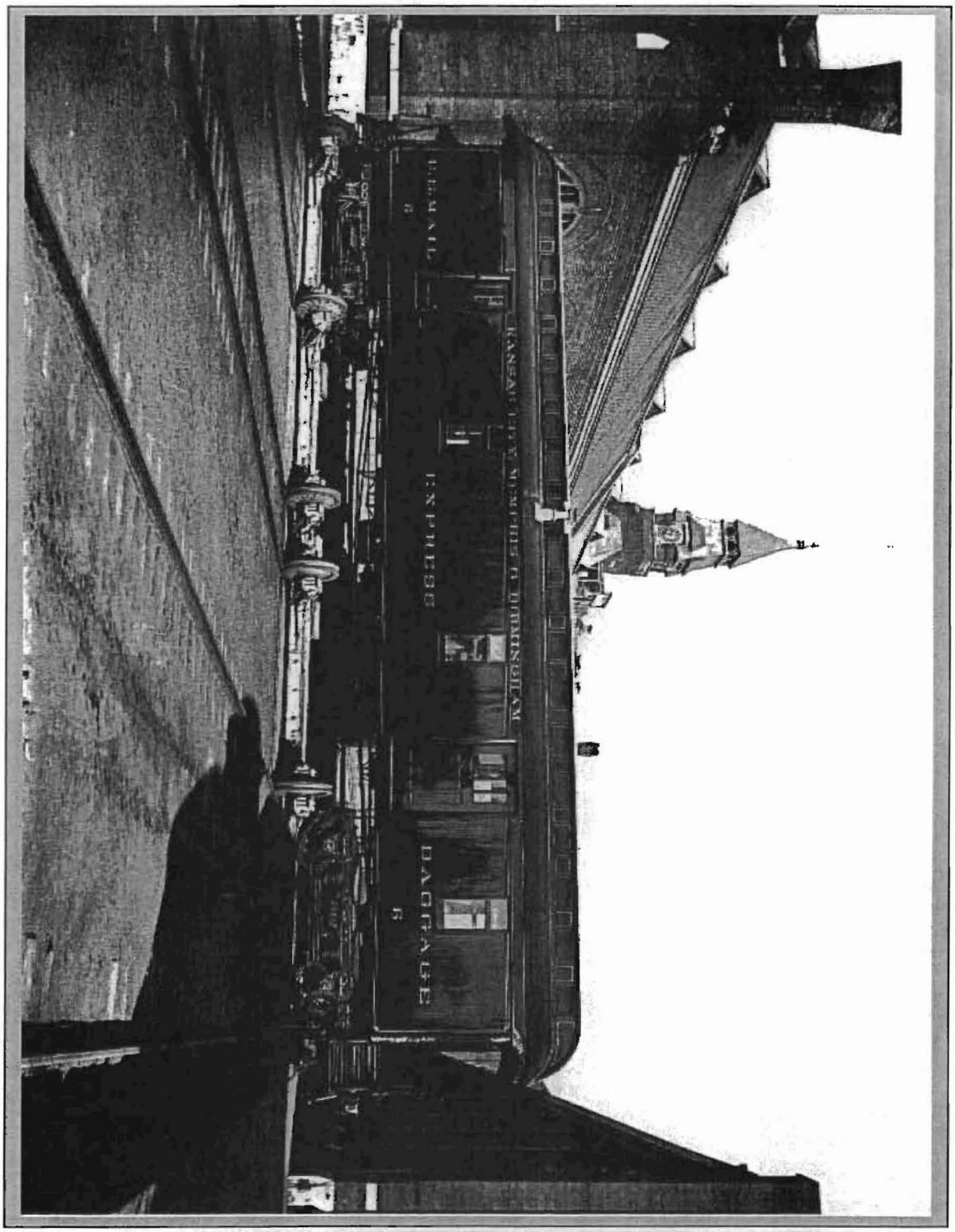
United States Railway Post Office Car, Atlantic & West Point Railroad
Pullman Shops 1894
Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History



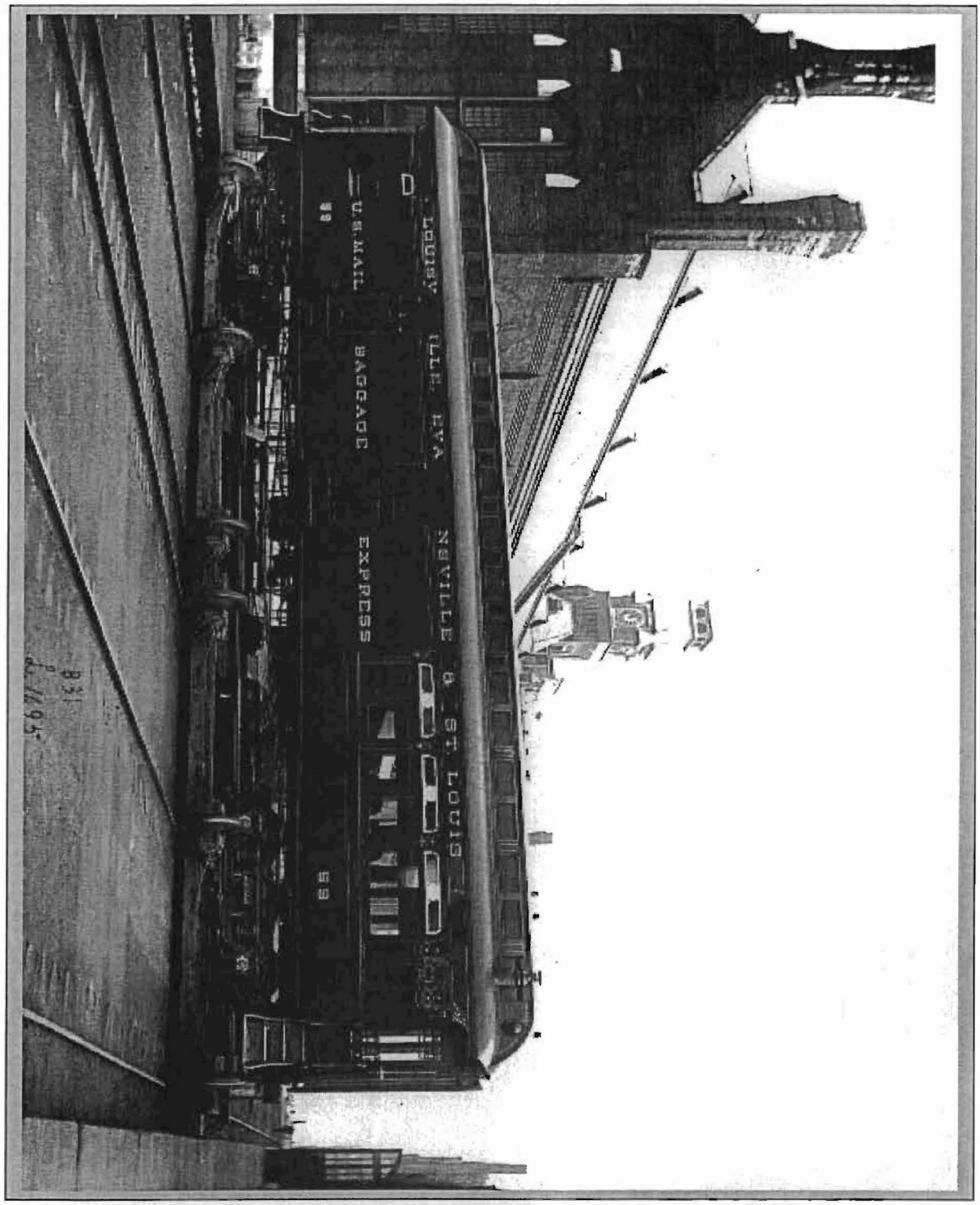
Interior of United States Railway Post Office Car
Pullman Shops 1894
Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History



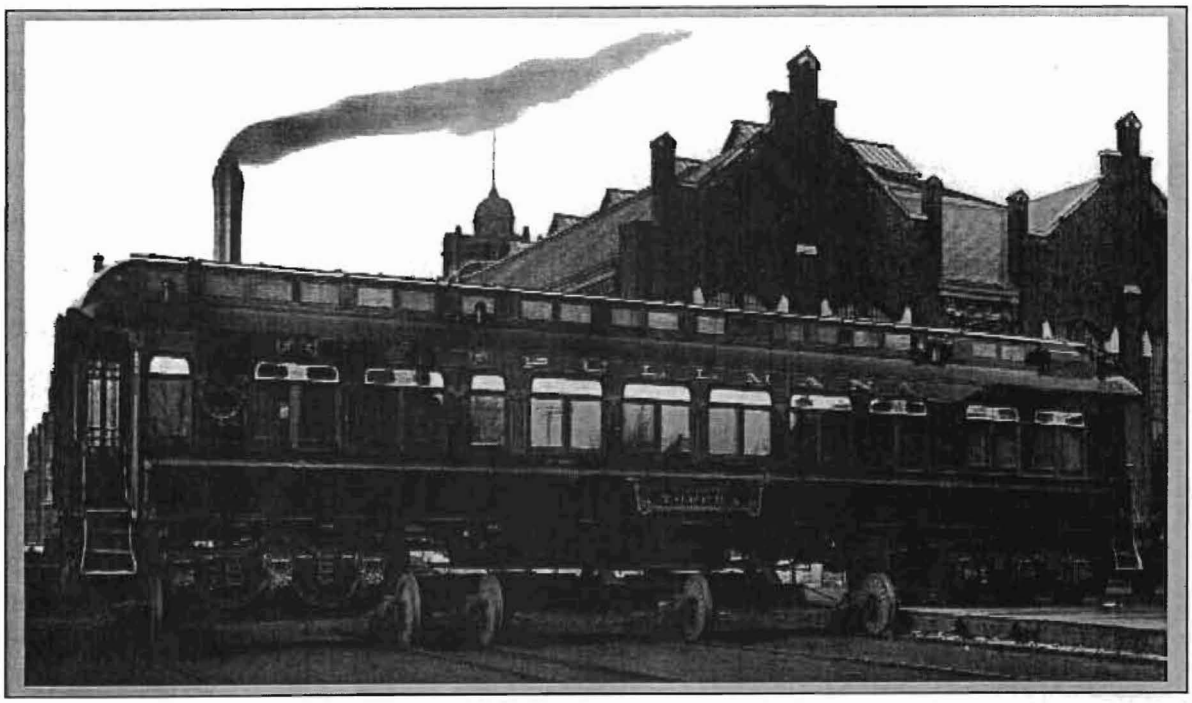
Baggage Car
Tennessee & Midland Railroad, Pullman Shops 1880s
Transportation Collection
Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History

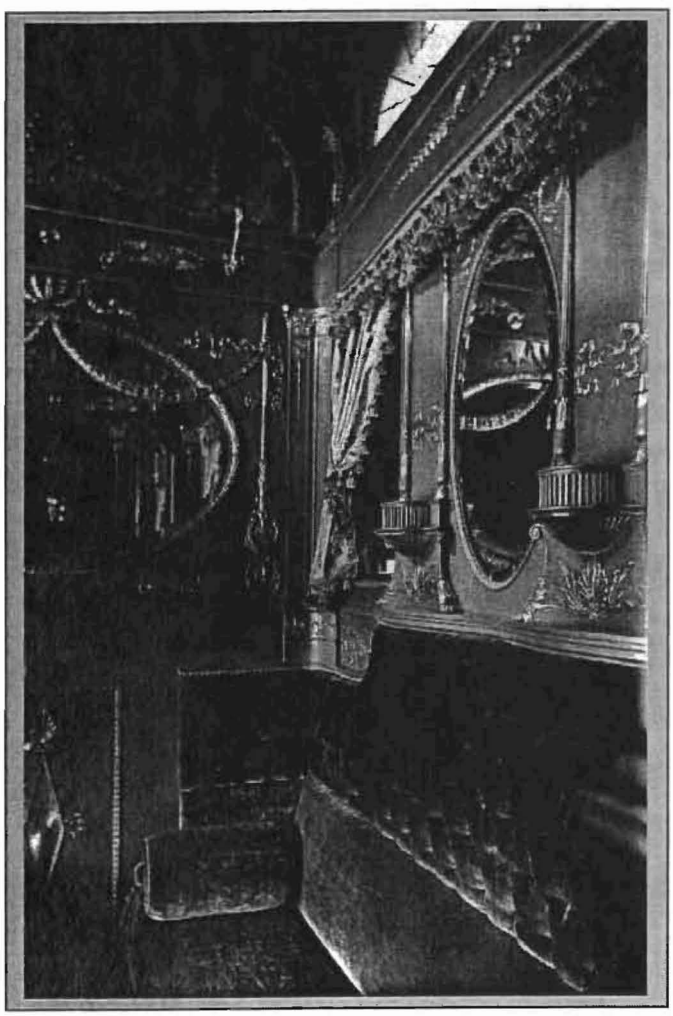


Baggage & Mail Car
Kansas City & Memphis Railroad
Transportation Collection
Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History



Combination Car
Louisville Nashville & St. Louis Railroad, Pullman Shops 1890
Transportation Collection
Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History





Above

Pullman Sleeping Car

The Topeka

Built at Pullman 1893
for the
Union Pacific Railroad

Left

Interior of the Topeka

Photos From
Transportation Collection

Smithsonian Institution
National Museum of
American History

Shop Abuse at Pullman

The previous accounts were by no means isolated instances. During the depression years at Pullman, the workers suffered immensely. Adding to these difficulties was an unresponsive system that placed maximum profits above every human consideration. The Pullman Company in these years employed a freelance managerial system plus a network of subordinates to achieve its objectives. Judging from the surviving records of the Pullman Company, it appears that little, if anything, was done to reprimand abusive and quarrelsome managers. As long as a supervisor got the work out of the employee, the company didn't care what methods were used. In an article published in the Chicago Tribune, Rev. Mr. Oggel, the pastor at the Green Stone Church in Pullman, denounced the strike but acknowledged, "that there are legitimate grievances against some of the foremen." [53] Relations between labor and management were also diminished through frequent firing of workers for the smallest violations, without worker regress. Below is a statement from Jennie Curtis who worked in the women's department at Pullman:

> For Four years we were allowed to make $2.25 a day at the price of 1893, which was a good wage for a girl, but which we well earned, as it was very tedious and confining, and long hours. At the time the shops closed on account of the strike, I was earning on a average eight cents a day at the prices of 1894.

Curtis went on to say the following about treatment of the workers:

> But the tyrannical and abusive treatment we received from our forewomen made our daily cares so much harder to bear. She was a women who had sewed and lived among us for years, one, you would think, who would have some compassion on us when she was put into a position to do so. When she was put over us by the superintendent as our forewomen, she seemed to delight in showing her power, in hurting the girls in every possible way. At times her conduct was almost unbearable. She was so abusive to certain girls that she disliked, that they could not stand it, and would take their time and leave. [54]

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53. *Chicago Tribune* May 14, 1894, "Pullman Strike Scrapbooks" (Chicago: Newberry Library).
54. Carwardine H. William, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company 1894)pp. 75-78.

With the state of affairs worsening, workers at Pullman turned to the American Railway Union (ARU) for help and support. In 1893, Eugene Debs founded the ARU on the principle of inclusion and open acceptance of railroad workers from all crafts and backgrounds. Under the existing membership rules of most unions, skilled and unskilled workers in the railroad construction field were excluded from joining. The ARU broke with that precedent and accepted those at Pullman. To the surprise of the nation, the ARU won a decisive victory over the Great Northern Railroad in April of 1894. This victory gave the ARU a substantial boost in membership recruitments. After the defeat of the Knights of Labor in the New York Central strike in 1890, the Knights organization went into decline. Many disillusioned Knights left the organization in 1893 or became dual members of both the Knights of Labor and the ARU. It was during this time that Pullman workers joined the ARU in great numbers.

The formation of the ARU local at Pullman took place clandestinely. Meetings for the union never took place on company property. They always were conducted in nearby towns. The Pullman Company used a system of paid informers to keep track of union activities. From this information, reports were compiled and kept in company files. In the Pullman Company records held in the Newberry Library in Chicago there is a report entitled "Report of a Meeting Held Under the auspices of the Arnerican Railway Union, At Turner Hall Kensington, Chicago Illinois, Wednesday Evening, May 9th 1894."[55] This report contained key information on the response of the workers who had met the previous day with Pullman Company officials. Worker representatives had discussed wage and rent questions with no concessions offered by the company.

The Pullman Company Financial Picture

The 1880s and the early 1890s had proved both lucrative and productive for the Pullman Company. The company had expanded operations to Chicago in

55. *The Pullman Company Public Relations History File* (Chicago: Newberry Library) Box 2, Folder 109.

1881. With an influx of business due to the Colombian Exhibition of 1893, demand for sleeping car accommodations soared. The general public loved the new concept of the Pullman Sleeper Coach, because it made travel much more comfortable and pleasant. The success of the Pullman Company came about in part through the cleverness and business ability of George Pullman. Pullman had taken a one million dollar investment in 1878, and turned it into a corporation worth $61,791,000 by July of 1893.[56] In the coming years, Pullman would dominate the sleeping car business through acquisitions and mergers. His name would become synonymous with security and financial soundness.

During the Depression of 1893, all departments in the Pullman Palace Car Company remained profitable with the exception of New Car Construction. New car construction accounted for about forty percent of plant operations.[57] The remaining work in the shops focused on leases, contracts, freight car construction and repair, and the foundry.

In order to avoid large layoffs and shutting down facilities at the shops, George Pullman took a number of large contracts at or below cost. On the surface, this seemed like a benevolent gesture towards the employees. However, the United States Strike Commission (the investigative board which heard testimony after the strike and boycott) had the following interpretation of events in its findings:

> In its statement to the public, which are in evidence, the company represents that its objective in all it did was to continue operations for the benefit of its workman and of trades people in and about Pullman and to save the public from the annoyance of interrupted travel. The commission thinks that the evidence shows that it sought to keep running mainly for its own benefit as a manufacturer, that its plant might not rust, that its competitors might not invade its territory, that it might keep its cars in repair, that it might be ready for resumption when business revived with a live plant and competent help, and that its revenue from its tenements might continue. [58]

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56. *Chicago Tribune*, May 17, 1894, 'Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook", (Chicago: Newberry Library).
57. Carwardine H. William, *The Pullman Strike*, (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1894), pp. 59-60.
58. *Report On The Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. xxxv.

From September 18, 1893, to May 1, 1894, the Pullman Company lost $52,069.03 on contracts in New Car Construction. This represented a 3.663 percent loss. To compensate for this loss, the company cut wages inside the department from twenty to thirty-three percent. In other departments, wages of the workmen were cut equal amounts, despite the fact that the company continued to show a profit through the depression. The Pullman Company responded to criticism of this policy by stating that a uniform wage standard needed to be established. [59]

As the strike at Pullman progressed, numerous efforts were made to reconcile the workers demands with company expectations. In each case, the Pullman Company simply refused to recognize the ARU. In meetings with groups of Pullman employees they continued to state that there was nothing to arbitrate. On two different occasions, the Chicago Civic Federation tried but was unsuccessful in reaching an agreement. The Pullman Company refused to move on even the most basic request and considered the intervention of the Federation as meddling in affairs they should not be concerned with. The members of the Federation who visited the Pullman Company included A. C. Bartlett, Ralph M. Easeler, and Miss Jane Addams.[60] In addition to work of the Civil Federation of Chicago, Mayor Pingree of Detroit, accompanied by Mayor Hopkins of Chicago, called on officials of the Pullman Company. Mayor Pingree presented the Pullman Company with telegrams from fifty mayors across the country asking the Pullman Company to begin the arbitration process with their employees. Mayor Pingree argued forcefully for arbitration citing his own personal experience in business dealings with labor.[61] Despite the valiant efforts of the mayor, the Pullman Company issued a statement refusing to compromise on this issue.

With business conditions rapidly deteriorating at Pullman, the working class found itself shouldering most of the burdens. There were few job cuts in the managerial and clerical positions. None of these employees suffered pay cuts.

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59. Ibid. p. xxxii.
60. *Chicago Times*, June 2, 1894, "The Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook" (Chicago: Newberry Library)
61. *Report On The Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895) p. 351.

The Pullman Company continued to issue regular dividends at eight to nine percent yearly. In 1892 and 1893, the company issued extra dividend payments.[62] When working-class employees tried to mediate their differences over wages and rents, they were met with cold rebuttals. After meeting with Mr. Pullman on May 9th, employees were given the opportunity to examine the company books. George Pullman also explained to the employee representatives that he had taken contracts at a considerable loss to the company. However, he failed to mention that these losses were only in one department. The rest of the Pullman divisions continued to remain financially sound. The town of Pullman and the Pullman Land Association were separately funded with different investors that were bound and governed by a distinct set of rules and regulations. From a sound business standpoint, it might have been wise for Mr. Pullman to use his influence as the CEO of the corporation to address grievances more fairly and to look out for the needs of the lowest-paid and hardest-working employees of the company.

Sharing the Burden

The inflexibility of the Pullman Company towards distributing losses set up a class and labor conflict. Had the Pullman Company shown more flexibility associated with the issues of salaries, layoffs, and rents, the troubles at Pullman might have been averted. In studying the course of events that unfolded at Pullman, the U. S. Strike Commission came to the following conclusion:

> Assuming that the analysis submitted as to the cost of several lots of cars affords a fair basis for averaging the whole of the contracts, it appears that the average percentage of cost of material in this contract work was about 75 per cent. Hence while the amount of loss was nearly equally divided, it seems that the percentage of loss borne by labor in the reduction of wages was much greater than that sustained by the company upon materials. Three-quarters of the loss for the company and the balance for labor would have more fairly equalized the division of loss on these contracts.[63]

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62. Carwardine H. William, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company1894) p. 57.
63. *The Report On The Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. xxxii.

On the question of reduction of salaries, the U.S. Strike Commission made the following observation concerning the Pullman Company's handling of wage issues:

> During all of this reduction and its attendant suffering none of the salaries of the officers, managers, or superintendents were reduced. Reductions in these would not have been so severely felt, would have shown good faith, would have relieved the harshness of the situation, and would have evinced genuine sympathy with labor in the disasters of the times. [64]

The Pullman Workers Fight Back

After the meeting of workers and company officials on May 9th, the situation in the Pullman shops reached a dramatic climax. The grievance committee that had met the previous day with management was unexplainably laid off. This action set off a chain reaction of events that would have far reaching consequences. On the evening of May 10th members of the American Railway Union voted to go out on strike protesting the firings and the deteriorating conditions at the Pullman shops. The strike was to begin the next day, on the 11th. The next morning, workers reported to their jobs as usual. News of the proposed strike had filtered down through informants to company officials. By mid-morning, a rumor began to circulate throughout the shops that the company would initiate a lockout within the coming hours. In an almost universal gesture, the employees of the shops stopped work and walked out. Between five and six hundred employees stayed on the job until the end of the day. After completion of the shift, the Pullman Company promptly shutdown all its facilities and locked its gates. These actions would facilitate one of the most bitter and difficult labor disputes in American history.

64. Ibid. xxxiv.

Hardening of Positions

Publicly, the news of the strike took the Pullman Company off guard.[65] Privately, the company was well informed of the activities of the American Railroad Union. However, the spontaneous course of events made it difficult to predict when, or if, a strike would develop. Once the strike began, the Pullman Company moved very quickly to protect its assets. The closure of the shops helped eliminate some expenses. The company also tried to put out the best possible image of the situation at Pullman through their press and public relations tactics. The quarterly dividend was issued on time in June. Later in the year, George Pullman had to defend against a hostile takeover of the company.[66] Despite this minor inconvenience, every effort was made to portray confidence and to reassure stockholders and potential investors of the solvency and reliability of the Pullman Company.

As for the Pullman employees, their main task during these difficult times was to keep themselves and their families alive. Relief agencies and individuals contributed to the starving strikers. Mayor Hopkins of Chicago donated substantial amounts of foodstuffs and money.[67] In addition, the American Railway Union posted a ring of workers around the Pullman property to prevent property damage. This action came under attack by the press who viewed this as an attempt to prevent replacement workers from taking the places of the striking workers. These accusations were completely false since Pullman made no attempt to reopen any of its facilities during the strike. Overall, the conduct of the strikers at Pullman was commendable, since no property damage occurred.

With the battle lines clearly drawn, both sides settled in for a long showdown. The strategy of the Pullman Company was to starve out its workers. Helping in this effort was the majority of the local merchants who could not afford

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65. *The Chicago Evening Journal*, May 11, 1894, The Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook (Chicago: Newberry Library)

66. *Chicago Post*, July 10, 1894, "The Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook" (Chicago: Newberry Library)

67. *Chicago Tribune*, May 17, 1894, The Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook (Chicago: Newberry Library).

to extend credit to the strikers. On the other hand, the union hoped to bring the company to the bargaining table through public pressure. They also wanted to shatter the Pullman myth concerning a "worker's paradise." In the end the Pullman strikers had too much to overcome. They simply could not match the financial resources of the company. The strikers also faced an uphill battle because of the hostility of the press. Without public sympathy, pressure could not be brought against the Pullman Company. The fact that no laws existed in this period to force arbitration made it impossible for the union to get a fair hearing before a neutral third party. All of these factors contributed to the defeat of the Pullman strikers. These events would be replayed again at the national level as the union tried to overcome the resources and manpower of the railroads and the Federal government.

George Pullman the Man

In assessing the life and accomplishments of George Pullman, one must look beyond the rhetoric and hyperbole concerning this man and look deeper to discover his true essence. George Pullman had a talent for business. He demonstrated this many times throughout his lifetime. However, he had great difficulty in dealing with his own workers. Many historians have written about Pullman's aloofness to his employees in the later part of his career. One possible explanation for this had to do with the size of the company structure. Pullman simply did not communicate with his employees, especially on the lower tiers of the company. If he had spent more time strolling through the facilities and talking with his workers he might have prevented some of the isolation and bad feelings that developed later. As it happened, mistrust began to build as the company entered difficult times. Once the strike began, Pullman's cool and detached demeanor only added to the employee's apprehension and concern. After the strike had ended and the dust of the conflict had settled, it became apparent that George Pullman had won the battle but lost the public relations war. His actions during the conflict only further damaged his own good name, something that position, power, or money could not restore.

Mr. Pullman's Dilemma

As the company's chief executive officer, George Pullman could not run the company entirely to his own liking. George Pullman controlled only $2,500,000 worth of the company's stock.[68] He had a board of directors and fellow stockholders to consider in every business decision. The list of the more prominent shareholders in the Pullman read like a "Who's Who" of the Chicago business community. These included Marshall Field (the Chicago department store giant,) Henry C. Hulbert (the director of several large banking trusts,) Erskine Mason Phelps (the founder of Phelps, Dodge & Palmer Wholesale Boot Company.) Other important dignitaries who owned stock in the company included Queen Victoria of England and Richard Olney the Attorney General of the United States. Olney had in his estate five hundred shares of Pullman stock at the time of his death in 1917. He had also served on the board of the Boston & Maine Railroad with George Pullman. [69]

After June 26, 1894, the Pullman strike entered a new phase. A nationwide boycott began with members of the American Railroad Union refusing to handle all Pullman equipment. The General Managers Association (GMA) now entered the fight on the behalf of the nation's railroads. The GMA took the lead in allocating resources and finding replacement workers. From this point forward, George Pullman no longer called all the shots. His voice represented only a single entity in a consortium of common interests. As a point of conjecture, even if George Pullman had wanted to depart from the group and settle with his employees, he may have been prevented from doing so by the pressure of the railroad interests. The GMA wanted to present a united front and crush the American Railway Union. Had Pullman left the consortium, one could speculate that he might have lost valuable contracts in the future. Nevertheless, certainly the GMA of Chicago was a powerful combination in its day, which no one treated lightly.

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68. *Chicago Post*, July 10, 1894, "The Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook", Chicago Newberry Library.
69. *Probate Records, Suffolk County Courthouse*, Boston, Executor's Inventory of the Estate of Richard Olney, 22 August, 1917, Last Will and Testament of Richard Olney, #177494.

In his book *The Pullman Strike*, William Carwardine blamed George Pullman directly for the strike by citing the many abuses both in the shops and inside the town of Pullman.[70] What remains of the Pullman Company records and financial statements tends to support Reverend Carwardine's assessment. There was no justification for such a stingy wage policy. Even during the Depression years, the company stayed fiscally sound.[71] Given the severity of the depression, some wage cuts were certainly in order but not to the degree and depth that they occurred.

In looking at this situation, one may ask the question: What motivated George Pullman to take such a strong stance? This answer unfortunately is locked away in the memories and life experiences of this business leader. However, we can gain some insights into this question from historical records. Pullman believed in the principle of laissez-faire economics. This economic theory focused on the concept of complete financial freedom for business and personal matters without government interference. He also believed that wages should be governed by free market forces alone. Pullman had made his own fortune through diligent work and a disciplined lifestyle, launching his career from practically nothing. Pullman also hated unions. He simply did not want to deal with them or recognize their existence. This fact predetermined his position and drove him to extreme measures in order to avoid possible arbitration.[72]

In examining the life of George Pullman, Rev. William Carwardine describes the irony that dominated his life.

> All honor to Mr. Pullman for the magnificent business sagacity in the development of the Pullman palace car idea. Few men are capable of bringing to a successful issue such marvelous

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70. Carwardine H, William, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1894)pp. 48-49.

71. Carwardine H. William, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company 1894)pp. 56-57.

72. *Chicago Post*, October 19. 1894, "The Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook" (Chicago: Newberry Library. Note: According to the same Chicago Post article, the Pullman Company lost $1,686,032 dollars under Income Account Heading. As Against an increase of $756, 059 the proceeding twelve months, a change for the bad amounting to $2,442,091, for the previous fiscal year. They also implied that these losses were if fact due to the Pullman Strike.

> results...What a golden opportunity this gentleman has had in the past years of his life to immortalize himself in the hearts of his countrymen, to work out some problem in the solution of the industrial question, to advise the interest of his city and his country, and yet how utterly has he failed. [73]

The failure of George Pullman to make even the slightest concession to his own workers started a domino effect of events, which led to a major crisis. The entrance of the ARU into the Pullman conflict escalated matters further. When the ARU announced a boycott of Pullman equipment, the GMA of Chicago entered the picture. Claiming obstruction of U.S. mail, the Federal Government came into the conflict both legally and militarily. An injunction was issued against the ARU, which prohibited execution of the boycott in any fashion. When the ARU ignored the injunction, they were cited for contempt of court. What followed were complicated legal battles and court cases that captured the attention of the nation for many months to come. The strike and boycott was costly leaving the nation with deep wounds that would take many years to heal.

73. Carwardine H. William, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: The Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company 1894) pp. 27-29.

Chapter V

THE PULLMAN BOYCOTT

In June of 1894, the American Railway Union met in Chicago for its national convention. One of the hottest topics at the convention was the fate of the Pullman workers who had been on strike for several weeks. The urgency of the strike weighed heavily on the hearts and minds of the delegates. Expressing confidence from their recent victory in the Great Northern Strike, the delegates pushed the Pullman matter out and on to the floor of the convention. A resolution was presented calling for an ultimatum to the Pullman Company. The Pullman Company was given till the 26th of June for the disposition of grievances presented by the employees. If at that time reconciliation could not be reached, a nationwide boycott of Pullman equipment would begin. The 26th of June came and went with no movement by the company. Starting the 27th of June 1894, members of the American Railway Union refused to handle trains with Pullman cars throughout the country. This action would spark a major conflict and redefine labor relations for the next two generations.

Eugene Debs and other members of the ARU leadership were opposed to a national boycott.[74] The union leadership urged the membership to proceed with caution knowing full well the consequences of this action. (The organizational structures of the ARU worked like a democracy. The majority would set the agenda and initiatives for the union as a whole). The railroads and GMA were a powerful combination; they would be formidable opponents. The GMA had deep ties to Congress and top political authorities. Eugene Debs also knew that the timing was bad for a major confrontation of this magnitude.[75] The terrible economic conditions made it still more difficult for a boycott to succeed. The American Railway Union was still in its infancy, being only a year old. The union needed more time to expand local organizations to develop its base. Despite the apparent shakiness of the union organization, the more radical element of the

74. *Report On The Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. xxvii.
75. Ibid. xxvii

convention carried the day. This membership did not heed the advice of the leadership and plunged the ARU into a nationwide conflict.

On June 27, the boycott officially got under way. ARU members began enforcing the boycott. How this process worked is clearly explained below:

> Should the railroads manage to get Pullman cars on any train then the train crew, including engineer, fireman, conductor, and brakeman, will refuse to take the train out; and should any railroad company discharge any switchman for refusing to handle Pullman cars, every man belonging to the union and employed on that road will be called out within six hours. [76]

In the early stages of the boycott, the ARU did an effective job in tying up rail traffic. Most of the railroads were able to get passenger trains in and out of Chicago only with the greatest of difficulty. A few railroads were completely shut down temporarily. Although freight traffic did not come under the boycott, it was nevertheless affected. In some cases, the tracks became blocked by mobs that had overturned railroad cars. This in turn stopped and backed up traffic for a given route. By mid-summer shortages of some items did occur. This included ice, fresh fruits, and vegetables.[77] These shortages were a concern to the public, but they did not impose a major threat to the population.

Obstruction of the U.S. Mails

The question of obstruction of mail shipments would surface frequently during the boycott and later during the legal proceedings. The ARU stood accused of conspiracy to obstruct the U.S. mails. For the ARU these charges were groundless. The union had always allowed mail and passenger trains through unobstructed, so long as the Pullman equipment was removed or cut off from the trains. On the other side of the issue, the railroads under the direction of the GMA insisted that no train would be move without Pullman cars.[78] This

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76. *Chicago Times*, June 27, 1894, "The Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook" (Chicago: Newberry Library).
77. Railroad Gazette, July 13, 1894, p. 493

78. *Debs V. Eugene, Writings and Speeches: Reply to the Article on, The Government in the Chicago Strike of 1894, in McClure Magazine*, July 1904, by Grover Cleveland, ex-president of the U. S. (New York: Hermitage Press Inc, 1948)p. 146. / Proceedings of the General Managers Association of Chicago, June 25, 1894 to July 14, 1894, (Chicago: Knight Leonard & Company June 29, 1894), p. 113.

stalemate accounted for some of the backups and delays on the railroad system. Throughout the boycott the majority of the destruction and holdups were not the work of the American Railway Union. This fact is born out of the testimony by Michael Brennan, who served as the Superintendent of Police for the city of Chicago. His testimony before The United States Strike Commission includes the following facts:

> From your reports are you able to reach a conclusion to what extent railroad men who were on strike participated in the disturbances and riots? So far as I have seen, or had an opportunity of learning, only a small percentage of railroad men were engaged in that. Who was making these disturbances, destroying property, etc? I think they were a lot of hoodlums and vicious people, mixed up with a lot of women and children. [79]

In fact, Eugene Debs and the top leadership of the union had continuously preached a message of non-violence and community involvement. The ARU also offered to provide crews for mail delivery, if necessary.[80] The union further cooperated with officials of the Union Stockyard who asked ARU members to move a trainload of animals awaiting rendering. Throughout the boycott the union continued to protect property at Pullman. On the other hand, some union members resorted to threats and intimidation They did this by trying to persuade non-union workers or workers from other unions to quit their employment and join the strike. However, all threats and violence against individuals and property were deplored by the ARU. In an article published in the *Terre Haute Weekly*, Eugene Debs laid down the ARU official position on violence.

> In view of the report on disturbances in various localities, I deemed it my duty to caution you against being a party to any violation of law, municipal, state or national, during the existing difficulties. We have repeatedly declared that we respected laws and order and our conduct must conform to our profession. A man who commits violence in any form, whether a member of our order or not, should be promptly arrested, punished and we would be the first to apprehend the misoreant *sic* and bring him to justice. We must triumph as law abiding citizens or not all. [81]

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79. *Report On The Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 357.
80. Ibid. p. 159.
81. *Terre Haute Weekly Gazette*, July 12, 1894, "Eugene V. Debs Papers" (Terre Haute: Indiana State University).

The question of obstruction of the U.S. mails was clearly a point of contention between the government and the American Railway Union. For the government in this case, obstruction was considered tampering with trains regardless of the circumstances or intent. In a letter sent to Attorney General Richard Olney, Postmaster General Frank H. Jones explained the opinion issued by the Justice Department regarding the stoppage of trains during the Pullman boycott.

> The strike is ordered in favor of the Pullman boycott, and the strikers refuse to permit trains to which Pullman cars are attached to run over the lines mentioned, and the railroad company declines to detach Pullman cars from the trains. These are mail trains, and under the opinion of the Department of Justice of April 21, 1894, it is an offense for anyone to interfere with a train carrying the United States mails, it being held by the Department of Justice in the opinion referred to, that, 'it is the law that under the provisions of the United States statutes it is an offense for any person knowingly and willfully to obstruct and retard the passage of a train carrying the mails, and it is no excuse that such person is willing that the mail car may be detached and run separately. He is bound to permit the mail to be carried in the usual and ordinary way, such as contemplated by the Act of Congress and directed by the Postmaster-General.' [82]

The determination of mail trains was left to the discretion of postal authorities. To select a new mail route, postal authorities would provide written notification to the division superintendent of each railroad.[83] Under this procedure almost any train could be designated as a "Mail Train." A degree of collusion existed between the railroad companies and the postal authorities through the insistence that mails be carried in their "normal and usual manner." The Justice Department had strong legal precedents to carry out this mandate.[84] The way the law was set up allowed the railroads to operate under one set of rules while the union had to operate under different rules. From a legal standpoint, the railroads obstructed the mails themselves on a number of occasions. An example of how this worked is taken from The U.S. Strike Commission Report. In order to gain public sympathy against the boycott and

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82. *Appendix To The Annual Report Of The Attorney General Of The United States For The Year 1896* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1896) June 30, 1894, p. 245.

83. Ibid. p. 248.

enforce the charge of obstruction against the ARU, the Rock Island railroad deliberately held several of its own trains outside of Chicago on July 6, 1894.[85] In Raton, New Mexico the Santa Fe Railroad refused to allow the eastbound limited to progress because the Pullman car, the "Ghent", was cut out by railroad workers. This action took place despite the fact that this was a mail train.[86]

In California the Southern Pacific Railroad refused to operate their own trains until a federal injunction forced them into service.[87] Back in Chicago, the railroads and the press were painting a bleak picture concerning the delivery of the mails into city. In reality the mails were moving fairly regularly with some inconveniences and holdups. This fact is substantiated through The Report of the Postmaster General. The Post Office Department reported that it moved 10,377,875,040 pieces of mail for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1895. This represents an increase of 343,901,250, or a 3.31% increase from the previous fiscal year ending on June 30,1894.[88] The Department attributed the increase in productivity to the addition of 174 new postal clerks, new equipment, and the reduction of errors.[89]

Despite the Postal Departments explanations for the increase, the numbers simply do not add up. The Pullman Boycott lasted from June 26 to August 1st, or about a month. Had the mails been truly bogged down to the point suggested in the indictments and the press, a huge backlog of mail would have existed. This situation would not have shown the positive numbers reflected in this report. In addition, the Post Office Department claimed the mail run from New York to Chicago to be their most important route in the system.[90] Had this rail line been completely cut or reduced in volume of mail, the nation would have

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84. *Note: Attorney General Richard Olney Outlined the Governments legal position in a letter to Roger Q. Mills August 13, 1894.* The Richard Olney Papers, Library of Congress.

85. *Report On The Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 65.

86. *Chicago Times*, June 27, 1894, "The Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook", (Chicago: Newberry Library)

87. *Letter from Richard Olney to Charles H. Tweed, July 24, 1894.* The Richard Olney Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Madison Building, Washington DC.

88. *Report Of The Postmaster General Of The United States*, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895) pp. 384-385.

89. Ibid / *Annual Report Of The Postmaster-General Of The U. S., Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1894,* p.401.

90. Ibid. p. 397.

been drastically affected. It all boils down to the fact that the government's case of obstruction was grossly over exaggerated. The ARU defendants were guilty only under the loosely defined parameters of the established legal precedents. These laws were contrived for the purpose of protecting the railroads and special business interests over the rights of organized labor.

The Government's Reaction to the Crisis

The government's uneven policy in dealing with labor troubles is illustrated by the enforcement of anti-trust laws. The GMA of Chicago existed as a powerful combination of railroad interests. They were unregulated, answering to their own board and membership. Their activities never came under question during the Pullman strike. On the other hand, the ARU came under attack for alleged violations of the Sherman Anti-trust law of 1890. Many legal scholars of the day argued that the law was designed to limit big business, not labor unions. If the ARU was indeed an illegal combination as stated in the original indictments, then the GMA was equally guilty under the law for controlling wages and other activities. In the aftermath of the strike and boycott, the U.S. Strike Commission gave their report. Regarding combinations, they made the following statement:

> At least, so long as railroads are thus permitted to combine to fix wages and for their joint protection, it would be rank injustice to deny the rights of all labor upon railroads to unite for similar purposes. [91]

For Eugene Debs and the American Railway Union, the question of governmental neutrality in labor disputes was never a given factor. It was clear to Debs during the Pullman boycott that the government had sided with business interests. [92] The government had used the power of the injunction to tie up and restrict the leadership of the union. They also brought in Federal troops not primarily for the suppression of hostilities but to enforce the injunction.[93] As

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91. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. xxxi.

92. Debs V. Eugene.*Writings and Speeches: "Reply to the article on, The Government in the Chicago Strike of 1894, in McClure Magazine, July 1904, by Grover Cleveland. Ex-president of the U. S"* (New York: Hermitage Press Inc, 1948)p. 146.'

93. Letter from F. D. P. Snelling to Brown, November 20,1922.*Waldo R. Brown Papers*, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield Illinois.

evident in the upcoming chapters, the federal troops were ineffective in dealing with the mobs. The Chicago police and the state militia did most of the actual work in restoring the peace.

No Compromise

As the boycott began to lose some of its effectiveness, Debs and other members of organized labor realized the hopelessness of the situation. In an effort to end the current situation, the ARU offered to stop all its activities related to the boycott if the GMA would agree to take back former employees. This offer excluded anyone accused or convicted of a crime against the railroads during the conflict. Mayor Hopkins delivered the proposal to the GMA offices on the seventh floor of the Rookery Building, a prominent structure on the Chicago skyline of the 1890s. The proposal came back the very next day unopened. Mr. Egen, the strike manager for GMA, refused to accept this offer claiming he had no authority to answer for the association. The core issue at stake during this correspondence focused on the issue of unionism. The GMA refused throughout the conflict to recognize or deal with the union in any shape or form. This failure to communicate on even the simplest of terms caught the attention of the U.S. Strike commission. The commission cited the action of the GMA as "Arrogant and absurd when we consider its standing before law." [94]

How Wise Was the Boycott?

In looking back from a modern perspective, one realizes that the Pullman boycott was not the wisest action for the times, considering all the outside forces at work in politics and the economy. In exploring the many newspaper articles on the strike and the boycott, an interesting piece of journalism was discovered entitled "Is It a Boycott." The author of the article raised the question of public and individual rights in confrontations between labor and management. Should the traveling public have services removed without first having the right to show

94. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. xxxi.

their approval or disapproval through their pocketbooks? Listed below is a brief excerpt from that article.

> Mr. Debs ought to direct his efforts to prevent the purchase of Pullman tickets by the public. If he were going to boycott a store, he would try and influence the people not to purchase goods there; he would not take possession of the store nor lock the doors, nor would he go as far as insisting that no one should enter the store or take advantage of the offers made by the proprietors. [95]

The significance of this statement lies in its farsightedness. In the years following the Pullman strike, unions would learn how to use boycotts in new and effective ways. Public relations tools would become the new weapon of choice in dealing with obstinate companies or corporations. Had the American Railway Union selected this approach, the outcome of the boycott may have been different. Unfortunately for the leadership of the ARU, an activist rank and file led them in a different direction by forcing the issue directly with the railroads.

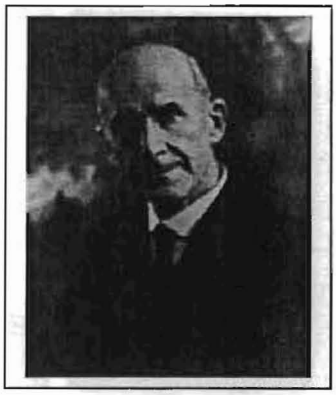
There is no denying that railroads were a vital link to the nation's transportation and economic infrastructure. Railroads were essential highways of commerce in the 1890s. The government guarded the railroad industry with the greatest concern and care, lavishing it with special grants and rights not given to other industries. During the Pullman boycott, the railroads experienced losses due to delays and destruction of property. Passengers were also inconvenienced, while shippers in the west could not get their products to market. Despite the seriousness of the situation, the Federal Government chose to ignore the grievances of the Pullman workers, no matter how legitimate. The Cleveland administration took mediation completely out of the picture and thus embarked the nation on a dangerous precedent. The use of the blanket injunction against unions did not begin under the Cleveland administration but grew in intensity during those years. This injunction was a curtailing of human rights and freedom of expression. With the Federal Government siding with the railroads, needed labor reforms would be delayed. In the following chapters, these and many more issues will be explored. The important principle to remember from the Pullman

95. *The Inner Ocean*, June 28, 1894, "Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook", Chicago Newberry Library.

boycott is that democratic law and principles need to be preserved even more diligently than usual in time of crisis. This is in order to protect personal freedoms and individual rights.

Eugene Debs

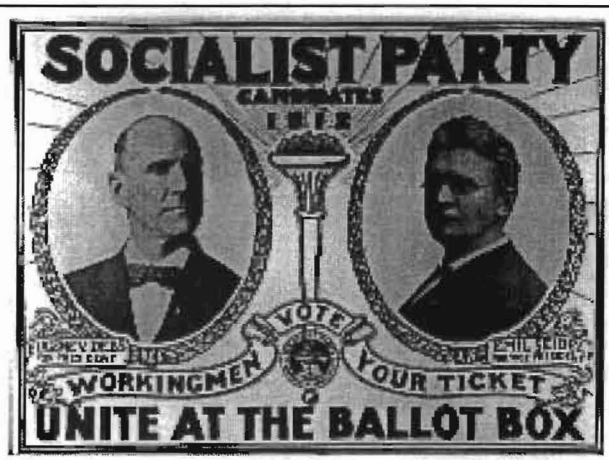
Eugene Debs During the Chicago Strike, Harper's Weekly July14, 1894



Eugene Debs in Later Life

Photo from Debs Foundation

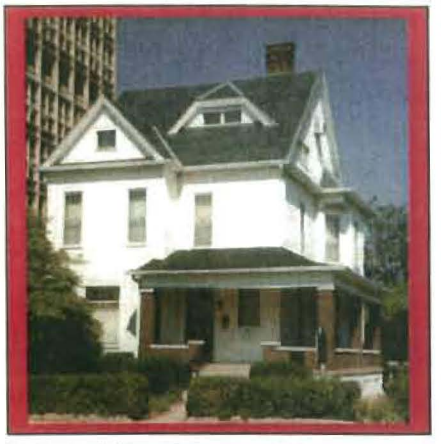
Left
Eugene Debs at the age of 14, working as a painter on the Nickel Pate R.R..
Photo from the Debs Foundation Terra Haute Indiana



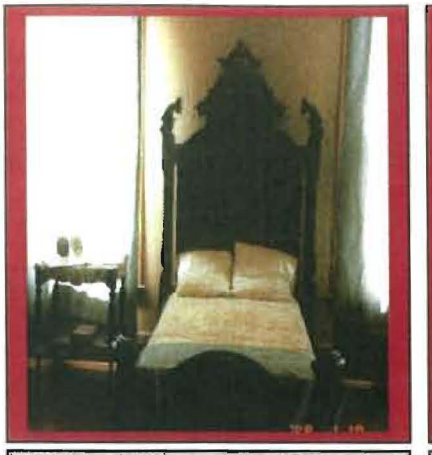
Eugene Debs on the Socialist Ticket
Photo from the Debs Foundation

Harper's Weekly Characterization of Eugene Debs during the Chicago Strike (King Debs) Cover July 14, 1894

Eugene V. Debs' Home in Terra Haute, Indiana

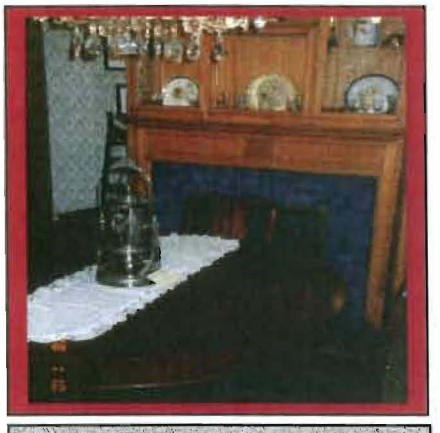


Exterior of Home



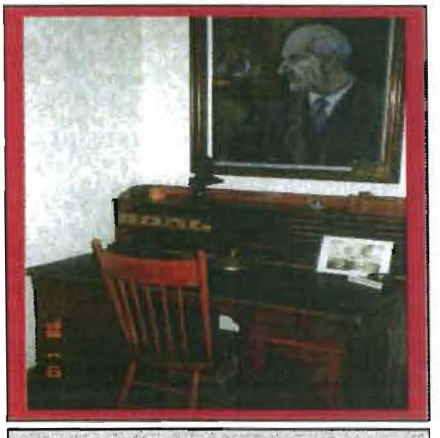
Bedroom

Fireplace



Dinning Room

Final Resting Place
Highland Cemetery in Terra Haute



Desk in Study

Third Floor Mural Depicting the Life and Times Of Eugene Debs

Part II

Chapter I

THE PRESS DURING THE BOYCOTT

Journalism in the nineteenth century reflected a unique blend of flamboyance and sensationalism. Newspapers in this era were extensively competitive. In Chicago there were ten medium to large scale newspaper operations. In addition, Chicago hosted an array of smaller newspapers and weeklies. These smaller newspapers covered the entire spectrum of political thought and appeared in several foreign languages, such as German, Polish, and Czech.

During the Pullman strike and boycott, the majority of the larger publications took sides with the railroads.[96] These included the following newspapers: *Chicago Herald, Chicago Inner-Ocean, Chicago Tribune, Chicago Journal, and Chicago Post.* Most of these newspapers left no stone unturned in trying to denigrate and ridicule the American Railway Union. Some of the nation's top newspapers and weeklies were just as stinging as the local press. *Harper's Weekly* led the charge of national newspapers and syndication's against the boycott. *Harper's* was completely opposed to the ARU, calling them anarchists and reapers of destruction and disorder. To *Harper's* and other like-minded newspapers and magazines, the boycott represented an unsavory element that was undermining the American financial system. It was inconveniencing the nation's traveling public and had to be put down swiftly. Below is a brief example from a *Harper's* article complete with its caustic rhetoric:

> It is an attempt at blackmail on the largest scale. It undertakes by duress to compel the community to interfere in a business of which it has no knowledge and which it has no rights; to interfere not to enforce its convictions of right, but relieve itself from distress by disregarding all considerations of justice and duty. If the attempt could succeed, all hope for such an adjustment of relations of labor and capital as will be consistent with social order must be abandoned. A community that can be terrorized by such a

96. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 157.

> conspiracy as this into enforcing its decrees against the owners of industries is already far on the road toward anarchy. [97]

As the unfair and biased coverage of events continued at the national level, few newspapers had the courage to oppose the larger publications. Some of the smaller eastern newspapers supported the strike along with some union trade papers. However, this represented a small minority of all publications. In his book *The Pullman Strike*, William Carwardine, minister of the First Methodist Church at Pullman, openly stated his objection to the press coverage of the strike and boycott.

> The attitude of the Chicago press has been such as to completely bewilder the thoughtful and intelligent citizen who desires to know the truth, and to poison the minds in our midst whose sympathies naturally gravitate to the side of wealth. [98]. . .I presume that if I had not lived in Chicago instead of Pullman, and knew nothing about the Pullman Strike except what I read in three of the leading Chicago newspapers, I would have raised my hand in holy horror against these wicked Pullman strikers and all belonging to their side, and would have sustained Mr. Pullman and his company. [99]

In reality, there was little opposition to the tactics used by the mainstream press during the Pullman strike and boycott. However, reformers and civic-minded individuals took great exception to the methods employed. Mayor Hazen Pingree of Detroit argued quite skillfully that the large newspapers were under the influence of big money. This charge was accurate to the extent that large advertising revenue was paid to these papers. Another factor was that certain newspapers were controlled by large corporate interests. Pingree stated publicly, "The danger from newspapers lies in their outside connections and their inside jobbing and corporate alliances." [100] He also accused newspapers of deliberate mistaking information. "It is clear that the newspapers do not publish the facts. It is as clear as the unclouded sun that newspapers should, as a question of pure principle, remain in the hands of private persons. [101]

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97. *Harper's Weekly*, Saturday July 7, 1894, Vol. XXXVIII, New York, p. 627.
98. Carwardine H. William, *The Pullman Strike*, (Chicago: H. Kerr & Company 1894), p. 48.
99. Ibid.
100. Pingree S. Hazen, *Facts & Opinions or Dangers that Beset Us* (Detroit: F. B. Dickerson 1895)p. 20.
101. Ibid. p. 23.

Nineteenth Century Newspapers

From a historical and journalistic perspective, many newspapers in the late part of the nineteenth century were more sensationalist than truth in nature. Some newspapers were no better than scandal sheets. These papers had their own ideological axes to grind in a very competitive marketplace. Little attention was addressed an article's journalistic merit. Emphasis was placed on getting the story out quickly before a competitor's edition hit the street.

With respect to freedom of reporting, there was little tolerance for professional freelancing. A writer for one of these publications had only minor journalistic license. Reporters had some discretion on minor matters but not on major issues. Journalists are always subject to the whims and direction of their editors, but editorial review came close to censorship in some instances. If a writer for one of these publications turned in a story that didn't meet the editorial policy of the newspaper, either changes were requested, or the story was rewritten to reflect the current publishing policy over the signature of the original author.[102] To illustrate this point enclosed is a brief quote from Eugene Debs that appeared in the United States Strike Commission Report:

> Reporters came to me in confidence, and two other members in confidence, and asked us not to have any feelings against them, because after the copy passed from their hands it went into the hopper and came out in a way that made us say things that never were said, and which they were not responsible for. We were made to say the most ridiculous and vicious things imaginable that went through the Associated Press, and then the press of the country generally made editorial attacks predicated upon those alleged interviews. The press of Chicago had hired falsifiers, and I can prove it, men to manufacture reports calculated to bring us into bad repute in this community and throughout the country. [103]

The use of the political cartoon had become a highly visible art form in nineteenth century newspapers. Cartoonists like Thomas Nast played a major part in exposing the graft and corruption of the Tammany administration in New

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102. *The Testimony of Eugene V. Debs, Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 157.

103. Ibid. p. 157.

York City. Besides being used as a form of political satire, the political cartoon emerged as a tool to destroy politicians and statesmen and to turn public opinion against causes and organizations. During the Chicago Strike, attacks upon Eugene Debs and the American Railway Union were exceptionally brutal. The cartoons painted the ARU as anarchists and destroyers of free enterprise. One of the more vicious cartoons which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* on July 21, 1894, was entitled "Vanguard of Anarchy." It depicted King Debs carried on his throne by a group of politicians led by Governor Peter Altgeld, Governor David H. Waite, Sylvester Pennoyer, and Senator William Peffer. These political figures are shown wearing clown outfits indicating the supposed foolhardiness of their positions. An excerpt of the editorial, which accompanied the cartoon, is attached below:

> Recent events have taught another lesson much more important. It is that commerce and in fact peace, of the country are in constant danger disastrous disturbance by a few thousand railroad employees blindly following the despotic leadership of irresponsible adventurers, and that this danger must be provided against at an cost. Society cannot tolerate such a state of things. A few weeks ago, hardly anyone knew we had a mighty ruler by the name of Debs among us, who could by a mere wink of his eye, without any sensible reason whatever, arrest the traffic of 50,000 miles of railroads, stop the food supply of large populations, throwing the second city of this country into bloody turmoil and oblige the national government to mobilize the army for a campaign. [104]

The attempt of this editorial was to inflict punishment on these individuals by appealing to the lower side of human nature. The emotional overtones are quite significant. Harper's wanted to link Debs and the ARU with such political figures as Governor Peter Altgeld of Illinois. The governor came under heavy attack for his pardoning of the three remaining Haymarket Conspirators in 1892. Governor Altgeld pardoned these men because he believed that the defendants had been improperly tried and had been imprisoned under false pretences by the Chicago Police Department. He further believed that there was insufficient

104. *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. XXXVIII, Saturday July 21, 1894, p. 674.

evidence to convict or hold the defendants. The release of the Haymarket defendants by Governor Altgeld resulted in his being labeled as a traitor and an anarchist. Later, during the Pullman boycott, Altgeld came under additional fire for protesting the sending of Federal troops to Chicago. By employing these methods, newspapers and magazines could play on the "fear factor" of the American public. These publications typically painted a deeper and darker picture than actually existed. [105]

The Pullman workers had legitimate complaints against their employer but could not get a fair hearing before the American people. The majority of the press coverage during this period openly showed signs of bias and chose not to represent the truth. In Chicago only one of the major newspapers, the *Chicago Times*, openly supported the boycott and strike. Two smaller papers, the *Chicago News* and the *Chicago Record*, were in support. [106]

Taking these factors into consideration, one can imagine how difficult it was for the ARU to get the truth out to the reading public. Unlike the New York Central strike of 1890, when the majority of the press supported the Knights of Labor, the ARU had to struggle against a consortium of business and governmental interests that opposed the principles of free contracts. It is apparent from this case that irresponsible journalism prevailed in an era known for "yellow journalism."

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105. *Report of the General Superintendent of the Police of Chicago 1894*,p.17. / Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894(Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 158.

106. *The Report of the Chicago Strike June July 1894*, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895), p. 157.

The Vanguard of Anarchy
The cover of Harper's Weekly
Vol. XXXVIII Saturday, July21, 1894

"Stockyards Rioter"
Chicago Evening Post July 9, 1894

Editorial Cartoon
No Date Given
Eugene Debs Papers
Scrapbook Series
Indiana State University Library

Chapter II

PUBLIC PRESSURE AGAINST THE BOYCOTT

Resistance to the Pullman boycott came from a broad coalition of economic and political groups. In addition, many religious leaders spoke out against the boycott. They feared that it would undermine Christian principles and produce confusion and chaos in a time of great economic uncertainty. The business community opposed the boycott because of potential losses. By early July, losses were beginning to accumulate because of plant closures and delayed shipments. Also, the business community was still trying to recover from devastating setbacks, which included many foreclosures and receiverships. Business leaders viewed the boycott as attempted extortion by the union, forcing business owners to take action against a single company in matters not related to their own operations. For the most part, these same leaders viewed the actions of the ARU as illegal, based on the Sherman Anti-Trust laws. Using these arguments, business leaders from all over the country sent telegrams to the president and members of congress asking for the government to take immediate action. [107]

The majority of the middle and upper-middle classes were not supportive of the boycott either. These groups represented many of the small business owners in the nation. Also included in this group were investors and those working on Wall Street. Farmers overwhelmingly opposed the boycott because they feared not being able to ship their commodities to market. In California, produce rotted in the field because shippers could not arrange transportation to distribution centers in the east. Regional opposition was particularly strong in the South, despite the fact that the ARU had extensive unions there. The average southerner objected to the Pullman boycott because of concerns over possible plummeting of agricultural prices in a strike situation. The South at this time was also more agrarian and less industrial. This made support for the boycott difficult at best for the majority of farmers in the South. Enclosed is an excerpt from the

San Antonio Texas Express, which gives greater insight into southern attitudes and emotions surrounding this issue.

> Let us uphold the government, for it is ours. We made it and we must stand by it or prove false to our selves. Let us demand that the President put down the insurrection and compel respect for the laws. Let us insist that he re-establish order if he has to sweep every street of Chicago with grape and canister. Thousands of better men have died that the government might live than those who are now defying the law. This is the time for the South to demonstrate her loyalty to the old flag. Our brethren of the North "saved the union;" now let us notify the President that we are ready to return the compliment to shoulder a musket if need be, and make Old Glory respected wherever its shadow falls." [108]

THE CHICAGO STRIKE AND THE CLERGY

For the majority of the clergy in the United States, the Pullman strike and boycott represented an evil of great significance. The idea of work stoppages, no matter how socially important, seemed to go against the grain of nineteenth century values. In their opinion, a worker worth his or her salt was to embrace the values of the American "work ethic" and be obedient to the employer in all things. The question of wages and salaries rested entirely between the employer and the employee. The clergy also believed that the only redress an employee had when treated unfairly was to quit the position. These positions taken by the church fully embraced the "Free Labor" principles that characterized this era. Furthermore, the majority of churches opposed the idea of social confrontation and social action. For the most part, the clergy opposed strikes and labor disputes because they seemed to do more harm to the workers and their families than any possible benefit derived. The clergy also viewed the residual effects of strikes and boycotts as immoral. These included: the loss of jobs, lost wages, starvation and violence, and the moral degradation involved in the idle time and drinking by the men. However, what some members of the American clergy failed to grasp was the larger problem of corporate greed, which caused lockouts, cheating on payrolls, shop abuse, and favoritism in promotions and hiring. They

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107. *The Richard Olney Papers*, Library of Congress.

108. *The Opinions of the Press of the Country, On the Late Strike and its Significance* (New York: Published by the Morning Advertiser, July 20, 1894)pp. 25-26.

also failed to realize that the nation would have to settle these issues at some point in time or face the possibility of further labor unrest in the future.

Some of the clergy in this period turned a blind eye toward unscrupulous employers while blaming the victims for the problems associated with the strike. In a sermon entitled "The Strike and Its Terrors," the Rev. John A. B. Wilson of the Eighth Street Methodist Episcopal Church expounded on the situation in Chicago:

> Eugene Debs is a demagogue, the son of a saloonkeeper, a man reared and educated upon the proceeds of human ruin. This is a man who is able to bring death to hundreds, ruin to thousands and starvation to hundreds of thousands. [109]

In speaking to the press on July 8, 1894, Dr. Henrich Johnson, a professor at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Chicago, issued the following statement:

> There is but one way to deal with these troubles now and that is violence. . .The time has come when forbearance has ceased to be a virtue. There must be some shooting, men must be killed, and then there will be an end of this defiance of law and destruction of property. Violence must be met by violence. The soldiers must use their guns. They must shoot to kill. [110]

The Rev. A. B. Leonard, a general missionary of the Methodist & Episcopal Church, demanded the imprisonment of Eugene Debs and Governor John Altgeld as enemies of society. [111]

The Rev. Mr. Oggel the pastor at the Greenstone Church in Pullman had the following comments concerning the strike at the shops:

> One-half loaf was better than no bread and that they had been getting two thirds. Every one of the legitimate conditions to warrant a strike is wanting. That there are legitimate grievances against some of the foreman, I presume to be true. But the point I make from an impartial standpoint is that there was nothing of sufficient force to warrant this strike at this particular time, and because of this I fear there is nothing to arouse public sympathy. [112]

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109. *New York Times*, July 9, 1894, p. 3.
110. *The New York Times*, July 9, 1894, p. 3.
111. Ibid. p. 3.
112. *Chicago Tribune*, May 14, 1894, Pullman Strike Scrapbook, Newberry Library Chicago.

The Rev. Dr. Frank Bristol of Evanston noted his objection to the Pullman Strike with this statement:

> Two wrongs never make a right, nor justify the fearful losses inflicted upon the country by strikes. Nothing can excuse these foolish, undemocratic, oppressive, law-defying and un-American conspiracies on the part of the working men. [113]

Fearing a rise in socialism, many catholic clergymen opposed the Chicago Strike. (The official Church teaching on capital and labor relations in *Rerum Novarum, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on Capitol and Labor, 1891* illustrates why they were opposed to socialism.) To the leaders of the Catholic Church, the rise of trade-unionism presented a perceived threat to traditional held views on the rights of private property and the roles of workmen in society. The church fathers were also disturbed by the associations these groups played through integration of outside influences. Groups like the American Railway Union were seen as secular groups that diluted existing social and religious values. For this reason many pastors would not support the strike in spite of its overall justification.

These statements illustrate how the sentiment among the clergy was overwhelmingly negative toward the strike. Had the clergy openly criticized the abuses of the railroad corporations, their message of non-involvement in the strike would have carried more weight with the workers. It must be further pointed out that, even today, many clergy members are hesitant to criticize unjust business practice for fear of losing corporate gifts or monies.

Public opinion against the strike and boycott came from a variety of sources. As a whole, most Americans had grown tired of the inconveniences and discomforts of protracted labor struggles. The nation was experiencing a difficult time. The depression was in the back of everyone's minds, no matter how just the cause was of the Pullman workers. These concerns were overshadowed by immediate need for economic survival. The nation was not yet ready for innovation and change; reforms would have to come later.

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113. Ibid.

Chapter III

DISUNITY WITHIN THE RANKS OF LABOR

From the very inception of railroad unions, organization took place within the structure of trade affiliations. This development had both advantages and disadvantages concerning contracts and organizational matters. By focusing along craft lines, unions could focus their attention upon issues that pertained to their part of a given industry. Some smaller unions found it easier to procure contracts with the railroads, because separate contracts allowed greater flexibility for management. Contracts could be staggered to allow for expiration and negotiations at different intervals. On the nation's railroads, you had separate unions for the brakemen, switchmen, railroad conductors, firemen, and engineers, all under the major banner of a central union. In the 1890s, some of the major unions that fit into that category included the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, and the Brotherhood organizations. (The Brotherhood organizations were comprised of five separate national unions. They were the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, Brotherhood of Railway Carmen and the Order of Railroad Conductors). This separate union concept worked well for American railroads, because it kept railroad workers from unifying and speaking with a single voice. As long as railroad unions remained fragmented, their power and effectiveness was limited. Only under unusual circumstances could regional and inner-union differences be put aside to form a common front. However, complete solidarity between organizations has never come about, while limited cooperation has always been short-lived.

Eugene Debs began his working life at the age of fourteen. He first worked on the Nickel Plate Railroad that ran through his hometown of Terre Haute, Indiana. Young Debs joined the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and later rose to the position of National Secretary. Debs became disenchanted with the organization after several disagreements over national policies. In 1893, he founded the American Railway Union. Debs wanted a stronger railroad union

that would include all workers within the industry. At this particular time only individuals with certain specified skills were eligible for membership in the Brotherhood organizations.

The Brotherhood organizations tended to be more conservative in approach to negotiations and honoring existing contracts. The union was always leery of joining a nationwide strike regardless of the circumstances. During the Great Railroad Strike in 1877, the Brotherhood organizations stood firm behind the railroad companies. In 1894, they refused to participate in the Pullman boycott. The organizations were instructed to work side by side with non-union workers during the strike. In addition the Brotherhood organizations provided and encouraged scab labor to railroads affected by work stoppages.[114] During the conflict the Brotherhood organizations claimed neutrality. However, the secret actions of the organizations placed them solidly with the railroad companies and GMA of Chicago. Chief Author (the head of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers,) made the following statement concerning the possible defection of his members to the support of the American Railway Union boycott:

> There is a lot of talk about the engineers being anxious to strike, and some threatening to do so whether the brotherhood orders it or not. You can put that down as nothing but nonsense. The engineers will not strike. They will stick to their engines as long as they are ordered by the railroads or as long as they are safe against violence. The Brotherhood of Railroad Engineers has no grievance, and any member that strikes or leaves his engine because the strike urged him to will violate the orders rules. The engineers taking such action will could henceforth shift for themselves." [115]

The failure of the American Railway Union to enlist the help of the Brotherhood organizations in the boycott left the eastern United States open to unrestricted rail traffic. This included an area from the eastern seaboard to Pittsburgh. The Brotherhood organizations had more locals in the eastern U.S. while the American Railway Union had more membership and support in the

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114. *Proceedings of the General Managers Association of Chicago, June 25, 1894, to July 14, 1894, Minutes of Special Meeting, June 29, 1894 & Letter form Grand Chief Author* (Chicago: Knight and Lenord Co. 1894) University of Illinois at Chicago, Special Collections Department, pp. 109, 159.

115. *Chicago Herald*, July 8, 1894, "The Pullman Strike Scrapbook", Newberry Library Chicago.

Midwest and West. Thus, the boycott was strongest in the middle and western states.

Although the American Federation of Labor did not officially support the boycott, many of its members were in sympathy with the ARU. Throughout the boycott, a minority of the AFL members openly endorsed the actions of the ARU and refused to transfer Pullman equipment. As the result of this action, a number of employees were either fired from their jobs or quit voluntarily in protest.

Samuel Gompers, the outspoken labor leader and activist, headed the AFL leadership. Gompers believed that the AFL organization and its membership should honor their current contracts and remain neutral during the boycott. If the AFL broke their existing contracts, the leadership of the union felt it would be detrimental to their own cause. The union also believed this action would bring on retaliation from the railroad companies based on the current mood of no compromise exhibited by the GMA of Chicago. Gompers stated his own belief concerning the Pullman boycott in a statement to the North American Review on July 8, 1884.

> Was the strike wise or justifiable? The answer to which must always depend upon the character and position of the party giving it. As to the wisdom, time only can tell. Since 'nothing succeeds so well as success' in all efforts of life. I presume this element will set its quietus upon this consideration of the subject. But was it justifiable? From the standpoint of the employer, No. Frorn the standpoint of a labor organization having an agreement with an employer whose provisions a strike would violate, No. From the standpoint of the ARU, having no agreement with either of the railroad companies involved, and expressing the inarticulate protest of the masses against the wrongs inflicted upon any of their brothers and their yearning for justice to all mankind, Yes; a thousand times yes. [116]

As exhibited in the tone of this statement, Gompers and the AFL were not hostile toward the American Railway Union. Although the AFL felt compelled to follow a different course during the boycott, they supported the American

116. Gompers, Samuel, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, Vol. 3, Unrest and Depression 1891-1894 (Chicago: The University of Illinois Press 1989)p.529.

Railways Union's right to help the Pullman shop workers. The AFL also gave money in the amount of $500 and $170 for the legal defense of Eugene Debs and the other defendants in their contempt and conspiracy proceedings.[117] Gompers also affirmed the rights of groups and individuals in their opposition to judicial malfeasance. In a letter to Eugene Debs, he made these observations:

> In presenting this to you we desire to convey more eloquently than I can find words to express our unqualified disapproval of the attempts on the part of governmental officials and the courts in throwing the weight of their influence in favor of corporate wealth and against the most necessary, useful and liberty loving people of the country—the wage worker. We offer it to you as protest against exercise of class justice, and as a further protest against the violation of rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. [118]

As the Pullman boycott began to weaken across the country in the middle of July, leading labor leaders converged in Chicago to consider the possibility of a general strike throughout the nation. This historic event was later known as the "The Briggs House Meetings." In the days just prior to the meeting, a number of smaller unions had already struck in support of the boycott. The Cigar Makers Union quit work in sympathy, while the Bakers soon joined in the protest. The Chicago newsboys launched a boycott of their own and refused to sell the *Herald, Tribune, Inner Ocean, Mail, Post, and Journal.*[119]

As the "Briggs House Meeting" progressed, there were many eloquent and passionate speeches. A number of smaller unions favored an immediate general strike. Samuel Gompers, representing the AFL, opposed a general strike. He feared that the Pullman strike and boycott had already been lost. He also believed that by continuing the struggle, only irreparable harm would come to labor.[120] In the end, the delegates to the meeting rejected the resolution for a general strike. Immediately after the Briggs House Meeting, the AFL Executive Council issued a proclamation compelling their membership to refrain from

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117. Ibid. pp. 562-563.
118. Ibid. p. 563.
119. *Chicago Tribune*, July 10, 1894, "The Pullman Strike Scrapbook", Newberry Library Chicago.
120. Gompers, Samuel, The Samuel Gompers Papers, Vol. 3, Unrest and Depression (Chicago: The University of Illinois Press 1989)pp. 524-525, 535-538.

participating in the boycott and ordered any group that had gone out to return to their jobs.[121]

THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE AMERICAN RAILWAY UNION

In June of 1894, the American Railway Union held its convention in Chicago. During the proceedings, the question of allowing blacks to enter the union came before the convention. The membership was split along regional and racial lines. Delegates from the South opposed the admission of non-white members. Delegates from the North and West overwhelmingly favored admission of blacks into the union. Some of the locals in California had already accepted both Blacks and Mexicans into their locals. [122] Eugene Debs urged the convention to accept the black man into the organization because "he was a citizen of the U. S. and needed our help."[123]

Despite this passionate appeal, the southern delegates held out. They threatened to leave the ARU if the amendment submitted by the committee on legislation was not accepted. The amendment called for a member to be born of white parents. In a statement before the convention, delegate S. D. Worden conveyed the feelings and sentiments of the Southern representatives by saying, "From a southern standpoint, if they admitted Negroes, they would have no ARU south of the Mason and Dixon line." [124]

To appease the Southern delegates, the convention adopted the suggested amendment. Nevertheless, the convention left it up to each local to determine which members it wanted to admit or exclude.[125] By sidestepping this issue, the ARU missed an important opportunity to forge an alliance between workers of all races. During these important years, blacks had been used time

121. Ibid. pp. 536-537.
122. *Chicago Times*, June 19,1894, "The Pullman Strike Scrapbook", Newberry Library Chicago.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid
125. Ibid.

and time again as strikebreakers in labor disputes. This would allow the ownership of any concern to employ blacks at sub-standard wages until white workers were forced back to work through economic deprivation. This also embittered white workers toward blacks. The Pullman Company deliberately kept the races separated. White workers were employed in the shops making and repairing the Pullman equipment, while blacks were used exclusively as porters and waiters on the Pullman cars. Although black workers were never used as strikebreakers in the Pullman strike, their availability and willingness to work was never in question. If it had been possible for the ARU to reach a more equitable solution to the racial question, then an important worker alliance could have been formed. This would have brought together shop workers of all races along with the porters into a more powerful and vibrant union organization.

The inability of the American Railway Union to unite with other organizations further weakened the boycott. The ARU needed a united front in order to win. Unfortunately, petty differences and inner-union squabbling allowed disunity to prevail. The fact that many of these unions competed against each other for contracts and membership did not help the situation. When the major railroad companies were able to set aside their own differences and speak as one voice through the GMA of Chicago, the efforts of the ARU were further hindered. The reality of the situation forced the ARU and the Knights of Labor to struggle on their own. This was a daunting task considering the obstacles that faced them.

Chapter IV

THE RAILWAY MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO

The formation of the GMA came about in 1886. The purpose of the organization was to "consider the problems of management arising from the operation of railroads terminated in Chicago." [126] By the time of the Pullman boycott in 1894, the GMA had twenty-four railroads under its umbrella. The management structure of the GMA consisted of a chairman, an executive committee, and a secretary. Elections were held to determine these officers. Funding of the organization came through assessments charged to each railroad. In a time of crisis, extra assessments could be levied to handle emergencies. However, all assessments required a majority vote by association members. For example, during the Pullman boycott, the GMA assessed each member railroad at $10,000 on June 28, 1894 and $15,000 on July 13 of the same year.[127] Overall, this produced $600,000 in ready cash during the boycott. This represented a huge amount of cash raised in a short time. It also gave the GMA a decisive advantage over the ARU fundraising.

Member railroads were also required to provide physical assistance during strikes and emergencies. If a strike broke out on an association railroad, the other member-railroads in the GMA were to provide skilled craftsman and tradesmen to the railroad facing a strike. This would ensure a steady replacement pool to fill vacated positions left by the strikers. Thus, they enabled the affected railroads to better utilize association personnel and resist the demands of the striking group.

THE COMMITTEES OF THE GMA

The GMA put a lot of thought and preparation into developing contingency plans for possible labor problems. The framework for handling these difficulties existed in the committee structure of the organization. Four major committees

126. *The Journal of Economic History, The Economic History Association*, Vol. XIII, spring 1953, p. 168.
127. *Proceedings of the General Manager's Association of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight & Leonard and Company, June 25, 1894 to July 14, 1894) Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago, pp.106-107.

were established to provide help and support. Committee Number One's assignment was to find skilled replacement workers. During the Pullman boycott, newspaper ads were placed in all the major eastern publications. The railroads also set up employment and recruiting offices in Pittsburgh and other cities. Committee Number two determined the fairness of existing wages to member railroads. Committee Number three's purpose was to set and regulate member assessments. Committee Number four focused on work-place rules and wages. This committee was also to have an employment bureau but did not receive the necessary votes to implement it.[128]

THE GROWING POWER OF THE GMA AND WAGE CONTROLS

In March of 1893, the Chicago switchmen requested a wage increase on the railroads represented by the GMA. The GMA flatly rejected the proposition, stating that the workers were receiving more than enough salary. [129] The GMA further vowed to oppose rigorously any strike brought against any of the railroads served by the association. As a result, the switchmen backed away from their earlier request. This victory motivated additional action by the Association. In the weeks following these events, the GMA circulated a report calling for the adoption of a universal salary for all switchmen working in the Chicago system. Furthermore, they recommended adjusting the salaries on all the existing railroads to the base figure calculated by the association. This meant that certain salaries were brought up to the new level, while others were reduced significantly. This action was not instituted by direct means, but through participation of individual railroads forming the GMA. This unified policy was tantamount to wage controls. Thus, a unified policy known as the "Chicago Scale" came into existence. [130]

The setting of the Chicago Scale never raised much stir in the legal community. Technically, this policy was in violation of provisions in the "Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890". The act prohibited the formation of combinations to

128. *The Journal of Economic History, Economic History Association*, Vol. XIII, spring 1953, pp. 170-173.
129. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p xxix.
130. Ibid. pp. xxix-xxx.

restrict or control the operations of any given industry for adverse profit or advantage. The Chicago Scale controlled wages, fixed costs, and tampered with a free market economy for labor services. These types of activities affected the overall free commerce of a given industry. In parallel circumstances, the American Railway Union did not fare well under the illegal combination provision of the act. The courts hammered them with injunctions and conspiracy charges, stating they were employing illegal combinations of labor. This double standard of enforcement under the Sherman Anti-trust Act, further embittered the working class of this country and made the large trusts more powerful. The U. S. Strike Commission made some rather interesting observations concerning combinations in its report on December 10, 1894:

> The association is an illustration of the persistent and shrewdly devised plans of corporations to overreach their limitations and to usurp indirect powers and rights not contemplated in their charters and not obtained from the people or their legislators. At least, so long as railroads are thus permitted to combine to fix wages and for their joint protection, it would be rank injustice to deny the rights of all labor upon the railroads to unite for similar purposes. [131]

THE GMA RESPONDS TO THE BOYCOTT

When the American Railway Union first implemented their boycott, the GMA in Chicago responded quickly and efficiently. Mr. John Egan became the official strike manager for the Association. His first order of business was to implement committee Number One. This committee began the process of locating replacement workers. All previous applications for employment on the various railroads were reviewed. Every effort was made to locate and find qualified workers. The response to these requests was overwhelming, considering that large numbers of railroad workers were out of work due to previous strikes and the depression.[132]

Egan's next move was to activate his legal team (committee Number Two) for possible suits and court hearings. He then circulated a memo to all railroad

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131. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p .xxxi..

132. *Proceedings of the General Manager's Association of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight Leonard & Company, July 1, 1894) Special Collections The University of Illinois at Chicago, p. 134.

officials requesting the immediate firing of any employees who refused to perform their assigned duties. On June 29, 1894, Attorney General Richard Olney demanded from association members the names or descriptions of suspects who "obstructed the movement or the passage of any train made up, that has in it as part of its make-up, a mail car or a car carrying mail pouches." [133] In the meantime, the GMA activated committee Number Three, to deal with railroad security issues. It was the responsibility of this committee to obtain guarantees of protection from local, state, and Federal law enforcement agencies for the defense of railroad property. This same committee hired an additional 3,600 deputy marshals to assist and protect private property.[134] The role of the U.S. Deputy Marshal will be discussed in depth in the followinging chapters.

The legal committee of the Association began their work by recommending that injunctions be placed upon the American Railway Union. The committee pushed for Federal injunctions, believing that they would have the greatest impact.[135] Individual railroad companies would petition the court for injunctions in the federal districts they resided in. This tactic proved effective because it kept the ARU defense team scrambling all over the country. The injunction proved to be crippling to the maintenance of the boycott. Once the injunctions were issued, contempt citations followed within a few days. This resulted in the arrest of Eugene Debs and all high-ranking officials of the ARU. These events were the pinnacle of a successful strategy of using the courts to join battle against the union.

The GMA of Chicago was a well-run organization. The success of the Association had to do in part with its excellent legal and executive representation. The railroads in this period usually selected some of the best talent from all over the nation. During the Pullman boycott, the able leadership of Evert St. John, the chairman of the Executive Committee, and John Egan held the association

133. Ibid. June 29, 1894, p. 113.
134. Ibid. June 19, 1894, p. 223.
135. Ibid. June 30, 1894, p. 126.

together. The ability of the organization to enforce decisions made it extremely powerful. The capacity of the Association to fund itself through assessments and mandatory contributions helped assure adequate funding in time of crises. Taking all these various factors into consideration, one can readily see the strength and power the Association possessed. This is why the GMA of Chicago was one of the strongest combinations in the history of business.

Chapter V

DIRTY TRICKS

The early stages of the Pullman boycott proved favorable to the American Railway Union. Large numbers of railroad employees quit in protest to the railroad's continued use of Pullman equipment on passenger trains. They refused to switch or handle the Pullman cars in any way. This left the railroads in Chicago and throughout the west desperately short of manpower. Committee Number one of the GMA was activated, but it would take time to hire new workers. Trains in and out of Chicago were delayed, while service in the west came to almost a complete stop.

In Chicago, the railroad managers were concerned with security arrangements presented by the boycott. Mobs had stopped and held up trains south and east of the city. As a safety precaution, some railroads suspended night service. Added to the worries and concerns of railroad executives were the many miles of unprotected tracks and rail yards within the city of Chicago. In the 1890s, a good portion of the city's railroad properties were neither fenced nor restricted from public access. This meant that in certain areas anyone could walk onto railroad property even in the most populated regions of the city. Some railroads addressed these needs prior to the boycott, while others did nothing to alleviate the problem. The process of building viaducts over the tracks had only begun in earnest by the 1870s. This came about from the crowded conditions and many railroad accidents within Chicago. The total openness of the railroad system in Chicago invited more destruction of property and vandalism during the first week of July in 1894. Had the railroads chosen to implement a closed and integrated system of security, the losses during the boycott might have been less. This fact alone figured prominently in negating possible company claims against the city for damages caused in the riots.[136]

136. *Chicago Times*, July 8, 1894, The Pullman Company Strike Scrapbook, Newberry Library Chicago.

The main burden for keeping the railroads secure within the city fell to the Chicago Police Department. During the boycott, they did an excellent job of keeping order within the boundaries of the city. All the reservists within the department were called to active duty, and no officer was permitted to leave his assignment. All three shifts were kept on duty, as officers had to catch sleep and meals wherever they could. Only after the arrival of Federal troops, however, did conditions get ugly.[137] Even then, the police officers of Chicago continued to do their jobs with what was regarded as the utmost skill and professionalism.

THE U.S. DEPUTY MARSHALS

In the first days of the boycott, Mayor Hopkins of Chicago clung to the belief that his police department was adequately handling the job of protecting the city and railroad property. The mayor would not ask for state or federal assistance. Believing that imminent danger was certain, Attorney General Richard Olney authorized the procurement of special Deputy Marshals. He wired John Arnold, the U. S. Deputy Marshal for Chicago, to deputize as many men as were required for the job. Arnold had difficulty in procuring the needed help; so he turned to the GMA for assistance. The railroads responded by sending some of their own employees to fill the positions.[138] These special deputies were hired as special representatives of the government but received their salaries directly from the railroad companies.[139] In a letter written to J.H. Cambell at the Justice Department, John W. Arnold clarified the department's position in using railroad employees as deputy marshals by stating,

"As I said before they were all employees of the different railroads, and the commissions were furnished simply as a protection to the men while in line of duty as such employees. They were not allowed to serve papers or to make arrests, and it was distinctly understood that they were to receive no

137. *Report On The Chicago Strike of June-July, 1894*, "The Testimony of Michael Brennan Superintendent of Police for the city of Chicago" (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895) pp. 354-355.

138. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)pp. 227-228.

139. Ibid. p. xliv.

compensation from the government but were to look to the railroads for whatever pay they were to receive." [140]

Judging from the statement of John Arnold, one might assume that the deputy marshals had only limited powers. However, the U.S. Strike Commission took a different view in their findings. In writing their summations for the commission, commissioners Wright, Kernan, and Worthington summarized the role of the U.S. Deputy Marshals in the Chicago Strike with the following statement:

> The United States Marshals, to the number of 3,600, were selected by and appointed at the request of the General Manager's Association, and its railroads. They were armed and paid by the railroads, and acted in the double capacity of railroad employees and United States officers. While operating the railroads they assumed and exercised unrestricted United States authority when so ordered by their employers, or whenever they regarded it necessary. They were not under the direct control of any government official while exercising authority. This placed officers of the government under control of a combination of railroads. It is a bad precedent that might lead to serious consequences. [141]

In testimony before the commission, John M. Egan stated reluctantly that some deputies had served in a dual capacity as train crewmembers and law enforcement agents.[142] In going through the payroll records concerning amounts paid to the special deputies, the name of W. H. Butterfield surfaced. William Henry Butterfield was sworn in on July 9, 1894 and worked as an engineer and fireman during the closing days of the strike.[143] Mr. Butterfield was employed as engineer with another Railroad Company prior to temporary employment with the government.[144] For his service Butterfield received the amount of $305 for approximately one months work.[145] This information only illustrates how widespread this practice was. The corporate hiring of law enforcement agents

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140. "Letter to J. H. Cambell from John W. Arnold", January 25, 1896, *Department of Justice Central Files*, RG60, National Archives College Park Maryland.

141. *Report on the Chicago Strike June-July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895) p. xliv.

142. Ibid. p. 270.

143. *Reports of Claims of Special Deputies #3414, RG60, Department of Justice Central Files*, 1894-7141-7218, National Archives College Park Maryland.

144. *The Death Certificate of William Henry* Butterfield, Wisconsin Death Records, Sauk County Wisconsin, State Historical Society, Madison Wisconsin.

145. "Reports of Claims of Special Deputies #3414, RG60", *Department of Justice Central Files*, 1894-7141-7218, National Archives College Park Maryland.

broke two important tenets of the American justice system. The first of which was that those employed in police functions should be paid civil servants and subject to boards of review and administrative discipline. Secondly, corporations should have the right to hire private security personnel, but their powers are more limited under law. In addition, all law enforcement personal should be fair and impartial in upholding the laws of the land. The evidence is clear from the Pullman case that the U. S. Deputy Marshals were anything but impartial in handling their duties. As evident in this thesis, these same deputies often broke the laws to accomplish their own objectives.

As matters began to escalate, the need for additional deputies grew proportionally. In order to satisfy the growing demand for additional manpower, John W. Arnold, the U. S. Marshall for Chicago, began hiring anyone off the street. This fact was verified through the following testimony of Malcomb M'Dowell, a reporter who worked for the Chicago Record.

> The United States deputy marshals and the special deputy sheriffs were sworn in by the hundreds about the third and fourth of July, and prior to that, too, and everybody that saw them knew they were not the class of men who ought to be made deputy marshals or deputy sheriffs. I recognized among them, not by name, but by sight, a great many whom I had seen down on side streets when I was going around, who did not seem to have a particular avocation.[146]

The quality of service provided by the deputy marshals came under scrutiny on many occasions during the Chicago Strike. For the most part, the deputies were untrained and undisciplined. Often they were hard to control. In testimony before the commission, Michael Brennan, the Police Commissioner for the city of Chicago, stated that on several occasions Chicago police officers had to arrest deputies for "indiscriminate shooting."[147]

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146. *Report on the Chicago Strike June-July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 366.
147. Ibid. p. 355

THE RAILROAD FIRES IN CHICAGO

The arrival of Federal troops into Chicago on July 3, 1894, only escalated growing tensions between the local population and authorities. Beginning on July 5, mobs set fires in the Union Stockyard, the 51st railroad yard, the Western Avenue railroad yard, the Panhandle tracks, and railroad facilities at Blue Island. The night of July 6 accounted for the heaviest losses. The national and local press blamed the ARU. However, union members did not commit the overwhelming majority of these violent acts.[148] From this assessment, one must ask: If the union railroad workers did not start the fires, who did? Part of the blame lay directly at the feet of the deputy marshals. From many accounts and testimonies, we can establish these facts. The majority of these temporary officers of the law were either railroad employees or men with little law enforcement experience. Many of these officers were prone to heavy alcohol consumption.[149] Often they would "provoke difficulties themselves by going around with a chip on their shoulders hunting trouble." [150] The overall effectiveness of the marshals in circumventing and stopping crimes was negligible. For the most part, they were a hindrance, rather than a help, to the situation. In fact, the deputies' conduct during the darkest days of the conflict put the safety of the community in question.[151]

Whether the deputies actually started the fires in the railroad yards throughout Chicago is uncertain. Nevertheless, certain available facts point to their complicity. In a report submitted by Michel Brennan, the General Superintendent of Police for the city of Chicago, certain unusual circumstances raised questions as to the role of the marshals in the disturbances:

> In some cases there were strong suspicions that the fires were set by Deputy United States Marshals which hoped to retain their positions by keeping up a semblance of disorder. As a proof that the amount of damage was greatly exaggerated in the daily reports, and in the claims made by the railroad companies, I would say that the companies soon after the strike ended threatened to bring suits

148. Ibid. p. 357.
149. Ibid. p. 367.
150. Ibid. p. 366.
151. Ibid. p. 366.

against the city for large amounts. I am informed that not one suit has not yet been commenced. [152]

For Eugene Debs and the American Railway Union, the culpability of the U.S. deputy marshals was undeniable. Debs stated that he could prove the involvement of the marshals in the destruction that took place in the rail yards around Chicago. "We have witnesses in large numbers, among them businessmen, who will testify that cars were fired by deputy marshals and that the riot was invited by the same element." [153]

In looking deeper into this matter, some unusual circumstances can be found surrounding the railroad fires. Many of the cars were deliberately placed beyond the existing fire line. In other words, they were outside the reach of fire hydrants and other fire equipment.[154] The cars were packed very close together, according to the Fire Marshals reports.[155] No Pullman cars were included in the equipment that was torched. Only freight cars or older passenger cars were destroyed. In the months following the fires, not a single member of the ARU was ever indicted or charged with arson.[156] Eugene Debs also claimed that the deputy marshals had cut fire hoses on the evening of July 6, as firemen tried to extinguish blazes in Chicago rail yards.[157]

In the weeks and months following the Chicago strike, the truth slowly began to surface surrounding the previous events. The dismissal of the conspiracy charges against the ARU leadership proved the innocence of the union during the boycott. In the meantime, a number of smaller newspapers and magazines began to expose the truth concerning the railroad fires in Chicago.

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152. Brennan, Michael, *Report of the General Superintendent of the Police of the city of Chicago to the city council for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1894* (Chicago: Cameron, Amburg & Company, Printers, 1894)p.17.

153. *Chicago Record*, May 8, 1895, Eugene V. Debs Papers, Special Collections Department, Indiana State University Library, Terre Haute, Indiana.

154. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 394.

155. *Report of the Fire Marshal to the City of Chicago, Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1894* (Chicago: Camron, Amberg & Company, printers, 1895) p. 91.

156. *Chicago Record*, May 8, 1895, "Eugene V. Debs Papers", Special Collections Department, Indiana State University Library, Terre Haute, Indiana.

157. Debs V. Eugene, *The Federal Government and the Chicago Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company 1910)p. 27. / *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895) p. 392.

One example of this investigative journalism is taken from the New England Magazine:

> Colonel Wright would tell our Boston Newspaper that not even the hoodlums instigated the burning the mass of cars, but that it was instigated by the railway managers themselves as the surest way to bring Federal troops and defeat the strike. [158] *

CLAIMS ISSUES

Not long after the embers had settled in the railroad yards of South Chicago and Blue Island, various railroad companies stated before the press their intentions to sue the city of Chicago for damage caused in the riots. Using cases from the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, the railroad companies hoped to establish another legal precedent on their behalf in the Chicago matter. However, in this case some significant barriers stood in their way. According to Mayor Hopkins of Chicago, the railroads negated their claim by not adequately protecting their own property and equipment. He believed the railroad companies were given sufficient notice of upcoming problems. The mayor also stated, "The companies have forfeited their claims to damages against the city by invoking the aid of the Federal Government, without previously asking and obtaining the protection of the municipal authorities."[159]

Among the Chicago city council reports from 1894 to 1900, there are no references to any lawsuits covering the riots and fires. Because events unfolded as they did, the railroads were left in a precarious legal position. The insurance companies that covered railroad property refused to honor various claims for damages because of riders in policies that excluded civil strife and disorders. This left the railroads holding the entire bag for the expense of rebuilding.

The Question of Complicity

The disposition of the deputy marshals represents a quandary of unanswered questions and concerns. Exactly what was their role in the rail yard

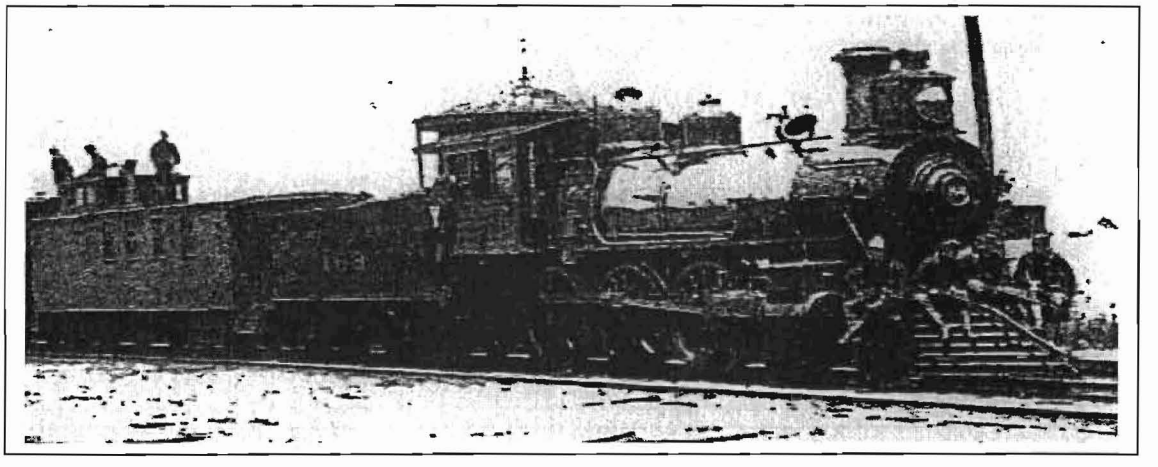
158. *The New England Magazine*, Vol. XV, October 1896, p. 254. * Note that Colonel Wright or Carroll D. Wright served as the chairman of the U. S. Strike Commission.

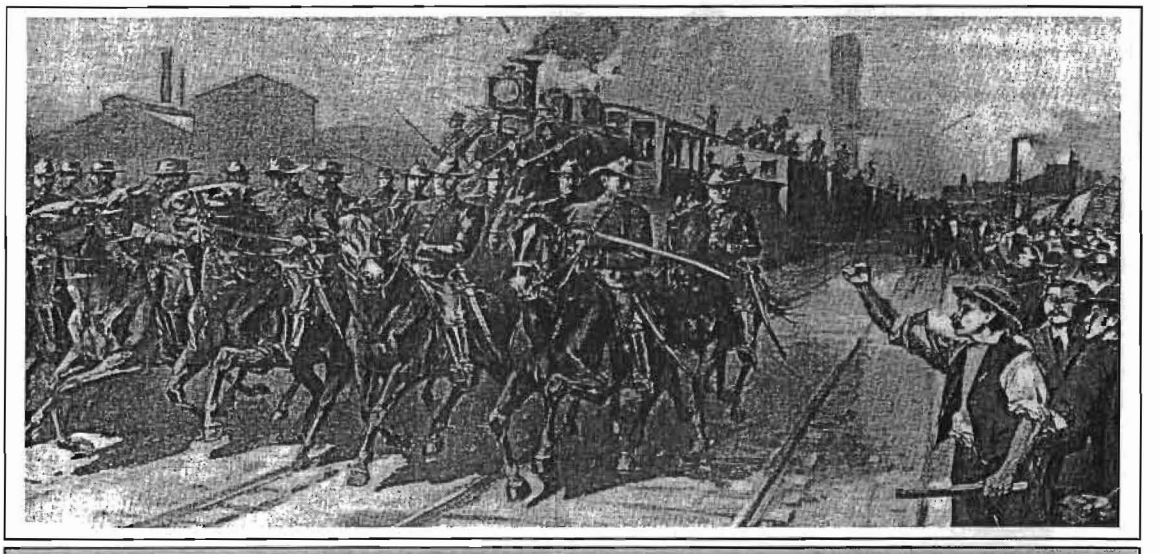
159. *Chicago Times*, July 8, 1894, "The Pullman Strike Scrapbook", Newberry Library Chicago

U. S. Deputy Marshals and Federal Troops

Left
Men Signing Up
For Marshal Duty
Harper's Weekly
July14, 1894

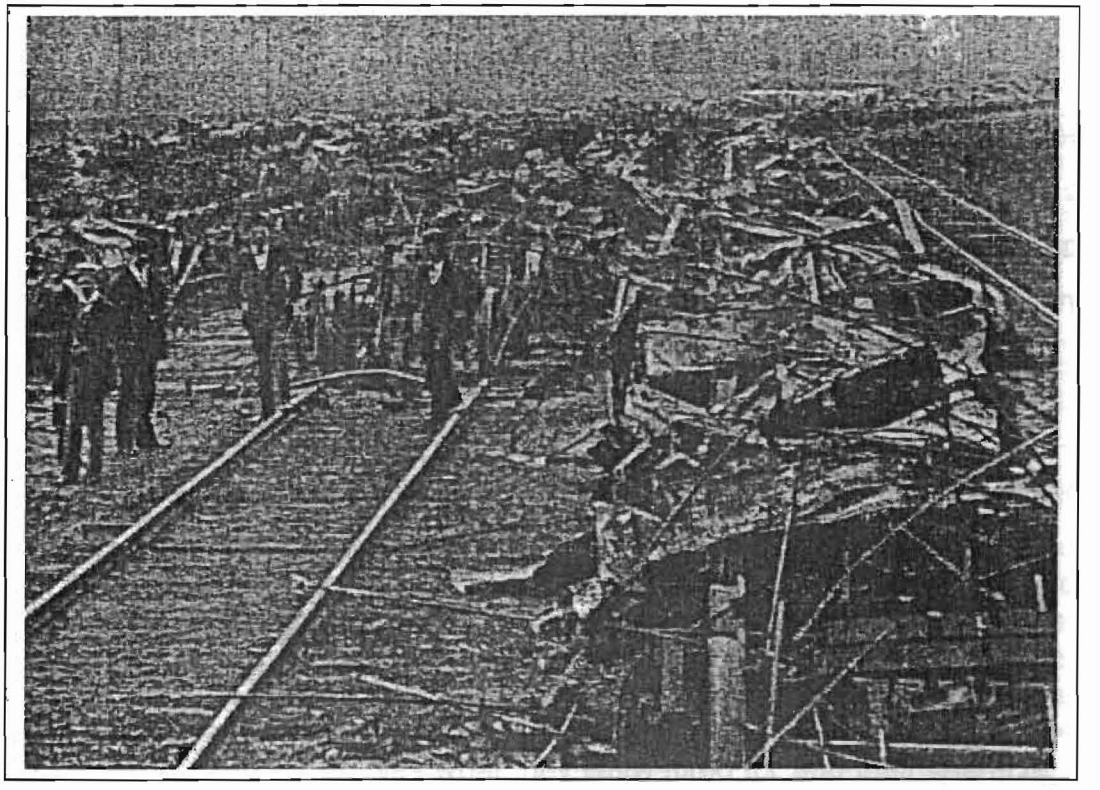
Below
Troops Protecting
Trains, Chicago
Historical Society
Photo



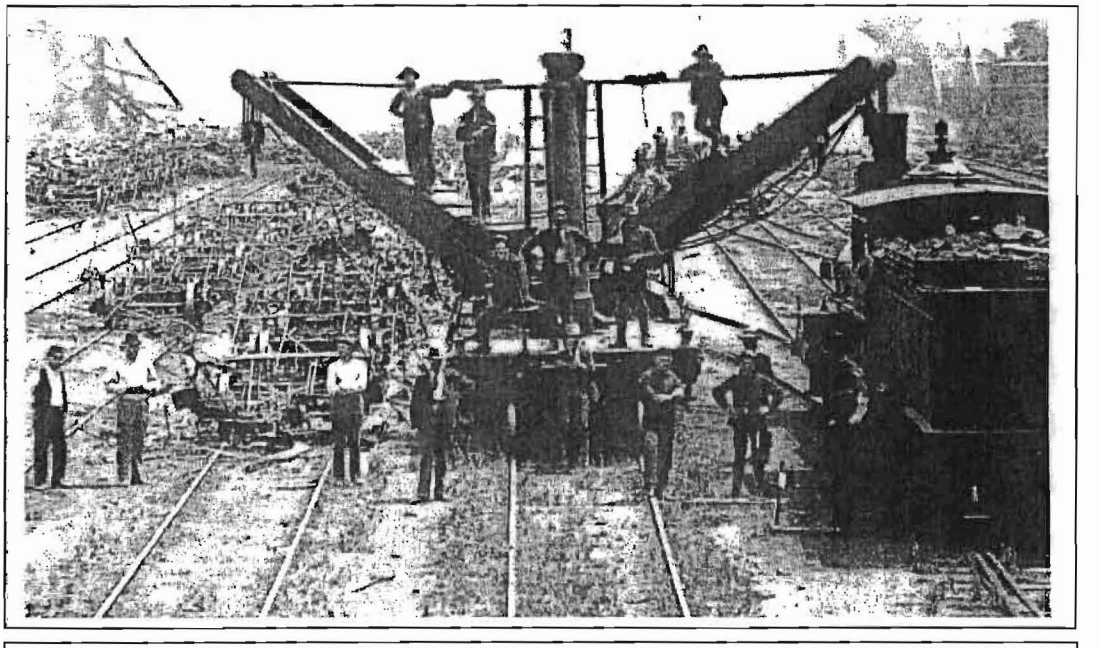


Above
"The First Meat Train Leaving The Chicago Stock-Yards Under Escort of U. S. Cavalry, July 10, 1894." Drawing by G. W. Peters from a sketch by G. A. Coffin. Harper's Weekly July 14, 1894

The Aftermath of the Rail Yard Fires



Looking Up the Panhandle Railroad
Photograph by J. W. Taylor
Harper's Weekly July 14, 1894



Clearing the Tracks
Chicago Historical Society Photo

fires that engulfed Chicago in the early days of July 1894? From a historical prospective, there is uncertainty whether they instigated the burning or simply let others do their bidding. However, there is strong evidence that the deputy marshals were directly involved in these events. From a practical perspective, it is also unlikely that the GMA of Chicago would have allowed any activities without their prior consent. The actions of the deputies had to be calculated and orchestrated by someone in higher authority. Since the railroad companies paid the salaries of the deputies, there can be no doubt as to their loyalties.

A quote from Eugene Debs on the involvement of the U.S. Deputy marshals in the Chicago Strike is in order during this point in the discussion.

> Peace and order were fatal to the railroad corporations. Violence was necessary to them as peace was to the employees. They realized that victory could only be snatched from labor by an appeal to violence in the name of peace. The deputy marshals, the very day they were appointed the trouble began. The files of every Chicago paper prove it; the report of the Strike Commission does the same. That was what they were hired for and their character is sufficient evidence of their guilt. [160]

Chapter VI

THE GOVERNMENT TAKES ACTION

In order to expedite cases against the American Railway Union, Richard Olney, Attorney General of the United States, appointed Edwin Walker as special legal council for the government. Walker had worked for many years as a railroad attorney. At the time of the Pullman boycott, he represented the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad (CM&SP) and served on the legal committee of the General Managers Association of Chicago.[161] The hiring of Walker as special prosecutor represented a huge conflict of interest, given his close ties to the railroad community. In fact, Walker continued his ties with the railroads even after taking his position of Assistant Attorney General. In court, S.S. Gregory, an

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160. Debs V. Eugene, *Writings and Speeches, Reply to the article on "The Government in the Chicago Strike of 1894," in McClure Magazine, July 1904, by Grover Cleveland, ex-president of the United States* (New York: Hermitage Press Inc. 1948, pp. 150-151.

161. *The New York Times*, July 2, 1894.

attorney for the American Railway Union, unsuccessfully challenged his relationship with the CM & SP during the conspiracy phase of the prosecution. Gregory served along with Clarence Darrow on the defense team.

Richard Olney had a similar railroad background. Olney served as a director for the Boston & Maine, Chicago Burlington & Quincy, the Santa Fe, and New York Central railroads.

The connection of Edwin Walker and Richard Olney to the railroad industry was undeniable. As members of the law enforcement community, they had an obligation to prosecute fairly and without bias. With their connections to the railroads, it was next to impossible to maintain complete objectivity. Their loyalties were split between serving the government and helping their clients. To complicate matters even further, some of the railroads represented in the legal suits against the ARU were in fact represented by Walker and Olney. The close association of the government attorneys with the railroads made it more difficult for the ARU defendants to get a fair trial. Clarence Darrow remarked that the federal government, "Might with as good grace have appointed the attorney for the American Railway Union to represent the United States."[162] In fairness, it must also be stated that Clarence Darrow worked for the Chicago and North-Western Railroad Company (CNWR) earlier in his career. Prior to his representation of Eugene Debs and the other union officials, he was asked to serve on the legal team for the General Managers Association in the Pullman matter. Darrow politely refused this honor and even backed away from many of the assignments given to him while remaining with the CNWR. Before Darrow took over the defense of the ARU defendants, he quit his position with the railroad but agreed to take case referrals from his former employer in private practice.[163]

162. Darrow Clarence, *The Story of My Life*, (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons 1932), p. 61.
163. Ibid. p.62.

THE GOVERNMENT OUTLINES ITS STRATEGY

To build a case against the American Railway Union, Edwin Walker had a Bill of Equity drawn up and presented to the U.S. Circuit Court in Chicago. This action took place on July 2, 1894. The bill contained complaints against the ARU in the operation and maintenance of the boycott. It also called for an injunction against the union and all participants. The injunction issued by the court (an Omnibus Injunction) prohibited a broad array of activities, such as stopping or hindering trains, obstructing the mails, stopping or persuading others to leave employment, threatening or harming anyone in the workplace, and communicating these actions to other unions. This same sweeping injunction was duplicated in other judicial districts throughout the country.

The broad definition of the injunction made it impossible for the American Railway Union to actively conduct the boycott without violating the law. The representatives of the union had come to a fork in the road considering the choices before them. The union could obey the injunction and effectively negate the boycott, thus leaving their sisters and brothers at Pullman to fend for themselves. Their other choice would be to ignore the order of the courts and take their chances with the legal system. By choosing the latter course, the union put itself in great legal jeopardy.

To illustrate how biased the court system was in favor of the large corporations in the late nineteenth century, included is a brief excerpt from the works of Samuel Grompers. Grompers represented AFL and privately in August 14, 1894 censured Judge Peter Grosscup for his Decoration Day Address at Galesburg, Illinois. Judge Grosscup later presided in cases against the ARU defendants. The premises of Judge Grosscup's statements focused on stifling the power of labor. He made the pronouncement, "Let us set a limit to the field of organization."[164]

In response to this assertion, Samuel Grompers made the following reply:

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164. Kaufman B. Stuart & Albert J. Peter, ed. *The Samuel Grompers Papers*, Vol. 3, "Unrest and Depression, Letter to Peter Grosscup", August 14, 1894 (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1989 pp.554-561.

> You would certainly have no objection officially or personally to workingmen organizing, and in their meetings discussing perhaps the 'the origin of man,' benignly smiling upon each other and declaring that all existing things are right, going to their wretched homes to find some freedom in sleep from the gnawing hunger. You would have them extol the virtues of monopolists and wreckers of people's welfare. You would not have them consider seriously that more than two million of their fellows are unemployed, and though willing and able cannot find the opportunity to work in order that they may sustain themselves, their wives and their children. You would not have them consider seriously the fact that Pullman who has grown so rich from the toil of his own workmen that he can riot in luxury, while he heartlessly turns these very workmen out of their tenements into the streets and left to the tender mercies of corporate greed. Nor would you have them ponder upon the hundreds of other pullmans of different names. [165]

With the American Railway Union's refusal to honor the injunction, the federal government moved quickly with legal proceedings. On July 17, 1894, George E. Peck, chairman of the GMA and president of the Santa Fe railroad, brought an official writ of complaint against Eugene Debs and the ARU. The court officially charged the defendants with contempt and promptly set a trial date. This was entered in the docket book as case Number 23211. [166]

The next move by the prosecution and legal system was to have Judge Grosscup convene a grand jury. They met on July 10, 1894, and considered the conspiracy charges against the defendants. The grand jury returned several indictments against the defendants. This action further strengthened the case of the prosecution, which now had indictments from the Grand Jury along with civil and criminal charges against the defendants. This multi-tiered prosecution allowed cases and legal action to be presented simultaneously in different jurisdictions.

After the conspiracy indictments had been rendered by the grand jury, the government prosecutors quickly took action against the ARU. If it could be proved that the defendants had obstructed the mails or tampered with interstate

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165. Ibid. *Letter from Samuel Grompers to Peter Grosscup, August 14, 1894* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1989) pp. 555-556.

166. *Contempt Citation, Case File 23211*, Circuit Court of the United States Northern District of Illinois, Northern Division, National Archives and Record Administration—Great Lakes Region (Chicago).

commerce, evidence of a conspiracy then existed. Stiff fines and sentences could be meted out. The government prosecutors also wanted higher bails set for the defendants, in order to impede their release.[167] In a telegram from Edwin Walker to Richard Olney, Walker outlined the merits of the case and discussed the penalty phase of the upcoming trial when he said, "I firmly believe that the result of these trials, and the punishment of the leaders, will be so serious that a general strike upon any railroad will not again occur for a series of years." [168]

THE CONTEMPT CASE GOES FORWARD

On December 14, 1895, Judge Woods found the representatives of the American Railway Union guilty of contempt. This judgment was imposed upon Eugene Debs and the key leadership of the union. Judge Woods sentenced Eugene Debs to six months in jail, while some of the other defendants received only three months incarceration. The sentence was to begin immediately and was to be served at Woodstock Jail just northwest of Chicago.

After the contempt case had come to trial, a reporter for the Chicago Record asked Governor Altgeld for his opinion on the verdict. The governor was a longtime lawyer and observer of Illinois politics. He made the following statement concerning Judge Woods' decision in the case: "In the Debs matter the corporations wanted Debs sent to jail, and it didn't make any difference what the facts were, or what the law was, everybody who knew Woods' history was satisfied they would get what they wanted." [169]

At the conclusion of the contempt case, lawyers for the defense team petitioned the United States Supreme Court for an appeal. The high court agreed to hear the writ of Habeas Corpus on the bequest of the ARU defendants. (A writ of Habeas Corpus states that a defendant or defendants have been inappropriately charged for crimes they did not commit. They are innocent and should be released by the court). In the meantime, on January 25, 1895, the

167. *Appendix to the Annual Report of the Attorney General of the United States for The Year 1896* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1896)p. 72.

168. Ibid.

169. *Chicago Record*, December 18, 1894, "The Papers of Eugene V. Debs, Newspaper Scrapbook," R#9.

government launched its conspiracy trial against the defendants. The prosecution tried to link the events of the boycott to a series of deceitful actions. Eugene Debs took the stand in his own defense and displayed his skillful oratory. His statements and responses to questions were convincing and deliberate according to eyewitnesses at the trial.[170] In order to show that the railroad companies had conspired during the boycott, Clarence Darrow tried to introduce the secret minutes of the General Managers Association into evidence. This document contained information on the Association's attempt to control and reduce wages.[171] In addition, Darrow intended to subpoena the railroads for additional documents. At this point in the trial, a strange circumstance took place. One of the jurors suddenly took ill, and the court refused to proceed without the juror. Clarence Darrow petitioned that an alternate juror be appointed and the proceedings continued. However, judge Grosscup refused this motion and the trial was postponed. Several more postponements occurred until the case was finally dropped from the docket altogether.[172]

From the accounts of this trial, some rather baffling questions emerged. What was the motivation of the prosecution for stopping the trial? Were they afraid that Darrow and the defense team was about to release damaging information against the railroad companies? Or, were they afraid the defense had a stronger case than anticipated and could possibly vindicate the accused? Whatever the reason for this action, the government's case against the defendants seemed to just melt away. The silence of the prosecution represented a partial victory for the union. However, Debs and the other defendants wanted a complete acquittal. Debs also said, "For a jury to pronounce us innocent in substantially the same case for which we were already serving a sentence," (referring to the contempt charges in the civil trial) "Would mean not

170. Ibid. *Chicago Record* Feb 14,1895, Indiana State University, R#9

171. Debs V. Eugene, *Writings and Speeches* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company 1908)p.25.

172. *Court Records Circuit Court of the United States Northern District of Illinois*, Case # 2338, National Archives and Record Administration—Great Lakes Region Chicago. * Note, the court spent $22,928 to prosecute this case and postponed proceeding on numerous occasions before finally dismissing charges on March 9, 1896.

only our complete vindication, but the exposure of the Federal Court that had, at the bequest of the railroads sentenced us to prison without a trial." [173]

When the U.S. Supreme Court began deliberations in *Re vs. Debs*, the prosecution had already put together a formidable team consisting of Richard Olney, Edward B. Whitney, and Edwin Walker. The main argument submitted by the prosecution focused on the principle of court jurisdiction. They argued that the lower courts had the authority to impose injunctions and enforce them through anti-trust laws.[174] They further argued that no claim could be made in such habeas corpus proceedings based on error in the original suit, that there was error in the proceedings, that there was no jury trial, and that the contempt charge was criminal in nature.[175]

The defense team consisted of Lyman Trimbull, Clarence S. Darrow, and S.S. Gregory. The main strategy of the team was to pick apart the injunction issued by the lower court. They made the following argument: "...The right to trial by jury in a criminal case is preserved in civil and private contempt." The defense team went further in stating, "A judgment establishing their guilt of that, which there was no violation of the injunction, afford no lawful authority for their detention. The court had no jurisdiction on such a finding to imprison." [176]

On May 27, 1895, the United States Supreme Court denied the petition of habeas corpus presented by the defense. The decision of the court was unanimous. Justice Brewer delivered the majority opinion in stating these words:

> The United States finding is that the interstate transportation of persons and property, as well as carriage of the mails, is forcibly obstructed, and that a combination and conspiracy exists to subject the control of such transportations to the will of the conspirators. [177]

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173. Debs V. Eugene, *Writings and Speeches, Reply to the Government in the Chicago Strike of 1894, in McClure Magazine, July 1904, by Grover Cleveland ex-President of the United States* (New York: Hermitage Press Inc. 1948)p. 159'

174. *Cases Argued and Decided in the Supreme Court of the United States, Book 39* (New York: The Lawyers Co-operative Publishing Company 1958)p .1097.

175. Ibid.

176. Ibid. p. 1095.

177. Ibid. p. 1100.

The decision of the high court surprised no one with legal expertise. The body of this court was very conservative and had shown its true temperament in a cornucopia of hallmark legal decisions. Just prior to *Re vs. Debs*, the court had ruled the federal income tax unconstitutional. They also established the separate but equal doctrine in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1896.) This important case added legal weight to many of the "Jim Crow" laws that existed at the state level. This single decision would allow active discrimination based on color. It would also help shape governmental policies and enforce inequalities in the private sector for half a century.

The action of the United States Supreme Court in *Re vs. Debs* required union officials to serve the remainder of their sentences for the contempt convictions. This step was insignificant compared to the long-term consequences of the case. The real implications of this decision meant that the courts could use the power of the injunction without fear of being overruled. This impunity gave corporations and the courts considerable legal leverage in labor disputes. Labor unions found it even more difficult to reach fair settlements in this environment in light of *Re vs. Debs*.

Chapter VII

MILITARY INTERVENTION

As the boycott began to take effect in late June, rail traffic in and out of Chicago decreased significantly. Trains were stopped or delayed in Cario, Illinois and Hammond, Indiana. The Illinois Central and the Rock Island Railroads were hurt the worst by disturbances and disruptions. The situation in Chicago was serious but certainly not hopeless.

Reports of train stoppages from the West and Midwest began to flow into the Justice Department. Attorney General Richard Olney kept abreast of the situation from Washington. Olney's strategy for defeating the boycott is outlined in the following statement:

> It has seemed to me that if the rights of the United States were vigorously asserted in Chicago, the origin and center of the demonstration, the result would be to make it a failure everywhere else and prevent its spread all over the entire country. [178]

With the national media whipping up sentiments against the boycott, pressure began to build for a quick resolution of the matter. Many business and civic leaders spoke out against the boycott, fearing a nationwide shutdown and economic free-fall. On July 2, 1894, President Grover Cleveland met with his cabinet to consider the matter. Some members of the cabinet expressed confidence in a military operation while others hoped for a more cautious approach. In the end, the hard-liners won the day.[179] Following the meeting, President Cleveland ordered troops at Fort Sheridan, Illinois to be placed on alert. On July 3, federal troops were deployed into Chicago. The troops were stationed in strategic locations throughout the city. Federal troops were encamped at the lakefront, railroad stations, the Federal building, and other points along the South side of Chicago.[180] General Nelson A. Miles took

178. *Appendix to the Annual Report of the Attorney General of the U. S. for 1896* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1896) p. 60.

179. Miles A. Nelson, *Serving the Republic, Memories of the Civil and Military Life of Nelson A. Miles* (New York: Harper Brothers Publishers 1911) pp.253-254.

180. *The Chicago Times*, January 14, 1895, Report On The Strike, Chief Brennan Tells of the Part Played by the Police, Newspaper scrapbook, Eugene V. Debs Papers, Indiana State University, Reel # 9.

command of all federal detachments inside the city of Chicago. Miles was a capable officer and had distinguished himself on the field of battle during the American Civil War. General Miles' first priority in setting up his command in Chicago was to establish a communication network to keep himself abreast of the latest developments inside the city, as well as throughout the nation. In order to accomplish this goal, he turned to The General Managers Association and local law enforcement agencies. General Miles also had daily reports sent to him from affiliate railroads.[181] This national information would have presented no problem if it had been balanced with information from other sources. However, the main thrust of the information received by the General either came from telegrams, the Attorney Generals office, military reports from Washington, or the press. This represented only one side of the picture. In exploring the many documents concerning the Chicago Strike, there are no instances in which General Miles communicated with or asked opinions of the American Railroad Union officials or representatives.

THE CLEVELAND ALTGELD CONTROVERSY

In order to understand the issue of military intervention more completely, emphasis must be placed on the bitter confrontation that existed between John Altgeld (the governor of Illinois) and President Grover Cleveland during the Chicago Strike. When the governor received word that federal troops were being deployed in Chicago he was both shocked and angered. Governor Altgeld had not been informed or consulted in this decision. In response to this move, the governor sent two separate telegrams requesting that the troops be withdrawn. He based his rebuttal of the president on two pertinent facts. First, Governor Altgeld cited the rights of states and local governments to handle their own affairs through self-government.[182] Second, the governor made it clear to President Cleveland that the situation in Chicago and throughout Illinois was not serious enough to warrant the use of Federal troops. The governor also believed that the

181. *Proceeding of the General Manager's Association of Chicago*, June 25, 1894 to July 14, 1894 (Chicago: Knight & Leonard & Company 1894) Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago, p. 182.

182. Altgeld P. John, *Live Questions* (Chicago: Goe. S. Bowen & Son 1899) p. 671.

Illinois State Militia could handle the current situation.[183] Later, the state troops vindicated the governor by their splendid performance during the crises. In many ways, they turned out to be more experienced and better suited for the difficult task of quelling civil disorders.

President Cleveland answered Governor Altgeld by stating that he was operating within the legal parameters of his office. The president sighted Section 5298 of the Revised Statutes, which called for the intervention of U.S. Forces in the event of unlawful obstructions, combinations or assemblages of persons, or rebellions against the authority of the United States.[184]

Some years later, after the crises had passed, President Cleveland reflected on his role in the Chicago Strike. Speaking at a special convocation he made the following statements:

> Federal troops were sent to Chicago in strict accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the United States, upon the demands of the Post Office department that obstruction of the mails should be removed, and upon the representation of the judicial officers of the United States that process of the Federal Courts could not be executed through the ordinary means, and upon abundant proof that conspiracies existed against commerce between the states. To meet these conditions, which are clearly within the province of the Federal Authority, the presence of Federal troops in the city of Chicago was deemed not only proper but necessary. [185]

A Costly Political Mistake

The assertiveness of the Cleveland Administration in crushing the Pullman boycott led to further frustrations and difficulties for the president. Moving federal troops into Chicago without first consulting the governor demonstrated a political gaffe of immense proportions. This decision represented a breach of professional courtesy. By alienating a key constituency within the Democratic Party, Cleveland hurt his chances for reelection. At this juncture, Altgeld had

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183. Ibid.

184. Cleveland, Grover, *The Government in the Chicago Strike of 1894* (Princeton: University Press 1913)p.19.

185. Ibid, pp. 39-42.

considerable influence within the state party. Additionally, Illinois commanded great respect in the election process because of its large number of assigned delegates at the convention. Any presidential hopeful needed the delegates of this key state in a close convention fight.

President Cleveland did not work closely with Governor Altgeld on the intervention issue because of political differences and lack of trust. Altgeld was more of a reformer and populist than an old-time democratic political hack. He set his own agenda and could not be bought. Because of the governor's stance on many issues, he was not to be considered pro big business. Among the private papers of Waldo R. Brown at the Illinois State Historical Library, are the unpublished letters of the late Judge, the Honorable S. P. McConnell. Judge McConnell was a long time political observer of Cleveland and Altgeld and made these profound comments regarding the Cleveland–Altgeld controversy.

> Governor Altgeld was not asked to employ the state troops and President Cleveland was not requested by the proper authorities to send Federal troops to Chicago. He sent them there at the request of railroad officials. The fact is, according to Edwin Walker, the leading council for the railroad companies, that the railroads desired to keep the state militia away and get federal troops there. They thought that the Federal troops would be more effective and less sympathetic with the strikers. I have no doubt that some of the railroad officials, perhaps all of them distrusted Governor Altgeld; none of them knew him well. I have no doubt that President Cleveland was deceived as to the attitude of Governor Altgeld. However that may be, the sending of Federal troops to Chicago at that time was an invason *sic* of state rights and wholly unjustified by the constitution according to the opinion of many great lawyers."[186]

Whatever the president's reasons for bypassing state and local authorities, it created bad blood between President Cleveland and Governor Altgeld. It further alienated powerful members of Cleveland's own political party and cost him a third term as president. In the presidential primary in 1896, Governor Altgeld headed a delegation of "Free Silver" democrats who took control of the state convention. They ousted the traditional "Gold" democrats and

186. McConnell, P. S., *Unpublished Memories*, Waldo R. Brown Papers, Special Collections, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield Illinois.

threw their support toward William Jennings Bryan during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. President Cleveland found himself locked out of his own party. For Governor Altgeld, the Cleveland rebuff represented a measure of personal satisfaction and vindication.

THE REAL PURPOSE OF THE FEDERAL TROOPS

Judging from the newspaper reports of the time, the federal troops were sent to Chicago to put down the riots and restore order. However, these actions were only secondary to the real purpose of the Justice Department and the Cleveland administration. Under General Order 30, the main objective was to "carry out the orders of the federal court." This meant serving warrants and other related duties. This did not mean a state of martial law existed. Under General Order 30, the Chicago Police still maintained their responsibility for the "protection of lives and property." [187] The Federal troops were also to assist the local authorities and guard key installations and properties.[188] From the very beginning of their mission, it became clear that the Federal troops were ill prepared for their assignment. Chief Brennam, the Police Commissioner for the city of Chicago testified that the city police had to provide protection for the federal troops as their trains entered Chicago.[189]

The presence of the federal troops in Chicago had anything but a stabilizing influence on the city. The sight of the troops angered the population and added to existing problems.[190] In testimony before the U.S. Strike Commission, George W. Howard Vice-President of the American Railway Union expressed his own personal observation concerning the presence of Federal troops. He stated the following:

> I tell you the people of America have been treated so unfairly--I do not speak for myself, but from the experience we had in going through the country-that the very sight of a blue coat arouses their anger; they feel it is another instrument of oppression that has

187. *Chicago Times*, January 14, 1895, "The Pullman Strike Scrapbook", Newberry Library Chicago
188. Ibid.
189. Ibid.
190. Ibid.

come, and they are liable to do things they would not do if the blue coats were kept away. [191]

Violence erupted on the fifth and sixth of July. On July fifth, federal troops and U.S. Deputy Marshals tried to move a train out of the Union stockyard. Their efforts were frustrated at every turn. At the end of the day, they had managed to move the train six blocks. The troops finally had to abandoned the train to the mercy of the mob.[192] On the evenings of the fifth and sixth, large fires burned throughout the Panhandle Yard and in the nearby community of Blue Island Illinois. Although the situation in Chicago was bad it did not resemble a full-scale rebellion. Along with the burning, there were lootings, instances of moderate violence, and threats to railroad personnel. Ascertaining the cause of these disturbances continually points back to the intervention of the federal troops. This is clearly evident in the relative calm that existed before their arrival. Only after the troops entered the city did things begin to escalate.

THE STATE OF ILLINOIS INTERVENES

As reports of delays and destruction of railroad property began to escalate in the early days of July, Governor Altgeld had received a few requests for assistance by cities and municipalities. Fearing possible political fallout, few local governments wanted to ask for help. Republican and Democrat rivalries also influenced the decision-making process. Throughout this time, the governor encouraged community leaders to call on him if they needed assistance. The governor sent a letter to John Lanehart, urging Laneheart to persuade Mayor Hopkins of Chicago into requesting state troops.[193] John Lanehart was a business associate of Governor Altgeld from his law practice and also performed limited administrative duties. On July 6, 1894, Mayor Hopkins officially petitioned the State of Illinois for five regiments of state militia.[194] The Illinois State Militia was a well-trained and disciplined force that had considerable experience with civil

191. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 39.
192. *Chicago Daily Record*, July 6, 1894, "The Pullman Strike Scrapbook", Newberry Library Chicago.
193. *Altgeld Administrative Papers*, Illinois State Archives, Letters July 1894.
194. *Altgeld Collection*, Illinois State Archives, Telegraphs, Box 1894/ Chicago Times, January 14, 1895, The Pullman Strike Scrapbook, Newberry Library

disorders. State troops had been effectively used to restore order during a coal miners' strike in the spring of 1894. The state troops also had a better knowledge of the local Terrein, especially inside the city of Chicago. Even in the 1890s Chicago was a sprawling city. It was difficult to move large numbers of troops without causing major congestion. For this reason alone, the state troops were best suited for the mission of peacekeeping inside a major metropolis. The governor's delay in sending troops had to do with his own political philosophy. This was because Governor Altgeld believed so strongly in local sovereignty. However, when conditions warranted, the governor took action swiftly on his own authority. This had certainly happened in Cairo and Danville, Illinois. When mobs gained control of these communities, Governor Altgeld sent troops immediately, and order was quickly restored.

The insertion of the Illinois State Militia into Chicago and the rest of the state had an immediate impact. The State Militia quickly dispersed a raging crowd at Forty-ninth and Lommis. Shots were fired, and stones were hurled at the troops. Company F of the second regiment swung into action, returning fire and charging the mob with bayonets.[195] These same troops established their authority and presence early in the campaign. Soon the word spread that these military men were not to be fooled with. In the long run, this prompt action restored order and saved lives. In a few days, most of the violence ceased.

Altgeld's willingness to use force is substantiated in a number of letters from business leaders and several railroads thanking Governor Altgeld for the prompt and swift action in the coal miners' strike and the Pullman matter. This hardly sounded like the man whom the Chicago Tribune and Harper's weekly had labeled as irresponsible and an anarchist.

Questioning Military Authority

The deployment of Federal troops in labor disputes had always been controversial. For a given group of officers and enlisted men, these actions

195. *Chicago Times*, January 14, 1895, The Pullman Strike Scrapbook, Newberry Library Chicago

represented a breach in the powers that separated local and federal governments. This was certainly the case during the Chicago Strike of 1894.

In his book, "Facts And Opinions; or Dangers That Beset Us," Hazen S. Pingree gave an account of an alleged insubordination of officers during the Chicago Strike. According to the mayor's book, these officers had met at a Chicago Hotel and planned to release to the press a statement of protest against the government's involvement in the strike.[196] However, according to the mayor's account of events, military officials got word of the plot and quickly disciplined and censured the officers involved.[197] Concerning the reliability of these statements, it is only fair to point out the reputation and record of the source. Mayor Pingree distinguished himself as a reformer and advocate of social change. His overall accomplishments were solid both as mayor of Detroit and later as the governor of Michigan. The question of personal integrity is not considered in analyzing these assertions, but the substantiation of these historical facts presents a problem from a research perspective. This account is based on second-hand information and is not backed by any hard evidence. Mayor Pingree was not present at this meeting, nor does he provide the reader with any sworn statements by those who participated. Either the mayor knew little more than what he disclosed in his book, or he simply kept the information in his vest pocket to protect the anonymity of those involved. Despite this fact, this raises interesting questions because it fits a general pattern of concern by some officers and men in the operations and deployment of federal troops in labor matters. If these allegations were true, they represented more than just an isolated instance.

A similar situation took place in California with the use of state troops. However, this time it concerned enlisted personnel. On July 5, 1894, United States Attorney Garter wired Attorney General Olney the following message:

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196. Pingree S. Hazen, *Facts And Opinions; or Dangers That Beset Us,* (Detroit: F. B. Dickerson Co. 1895) pp. 8-9.

197. Ibid.

> The state troops ordered by the governor to Sacramento to quell disturbance. They were placed at the command of the United States Marshal Baldwin. He reports failure to disperse crowd and to start and move trains owing to refusal of privates of several companies to obey orders by leaving ranks. He states that remaining force of National Guard of the state are not to be depended upon. [198]

The problem with insubordination during the Chicago Strike was minimal. However, these isolated instances were a warning to the nation. If the government continued to ignore the rights of working people and favor the powerful corporations in labor matters, then more military intervention would be inevitable. As later historical events have taught us, there are limits to obedience. Soldiers will not cross certain boundaries. This was certainly true of the French mutinies in World War I, when troops were mired down in the worst physical conditions and were treated as cannon fodder. The same was true in Russia as thousands of troops joined the revolution rather than face the sustained losses and deprivation of a prolonged and bitter conflict. These same troops also felt isolated and forgotten by an autocratic government that was out of step with democratic principles.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF INTERVENTION IN THE CHICAGO STRIKE

The federal intervention of U.S. troops into domestic labor matters set bad precedents for many years to come. First, the presence of this force in Chicago angered the population and actually made a tense situation worse. As previously stated in this thesis, the primary mission of the federal troops was to enforce the injunction against the American Railway Union and protect private property.[199] This objective could have been met without the use of federal troops through the reinforcing of local law enforcement agencies from outside locations and with the greater use of state troops. Also, the bypassing of local and state units of government caused friction and discord between the individual branches.

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198. *Appendix to the Annual Report of the Attorney General of the United States for the year 1896*, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1896)pp. 24-25

199. Miles A. Nelson, *Serving The Republic, Memoirs of The Civil And Military Life of Nelson A. Miles*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers 1911) pp. 253-254.

Effective government requires harmony in order to function at its best. The failure of federal administrators to work through local officials and communicate with them violated governmental protocol. In addition, it is clear from the responsiveness of the state militia that they were more than capable of handling enforcement of the laws and restoring order. In fairness, the Chicago Police Department kept things well contained until the arrival of the federal troops. In examining these various factors, one can come to conclude quickly that the federal government could have been much more effective had they chosen to mediate the situation rather than "govern" with an iron fist.

In the final report, the U.S. Strike Commission recommended some form of meaningful arbitration. They recommended that,

> ". . .There be a permanent United States Strike Commission of three members, with duties and powers of investigation and recommendation as to disputes between railroads and their employees similar to those vested in the Interstate Commerce Commission as to rates, etc."[200]

Congress never adopted the recommendations of the commission. Nevertheless, subsequent legal and legislative reforms took place in the coming years. The Chicago Strike brought to the attention of the nation the need for progressive changes in railway labor laws. In addition, the Chicago Strike placed more weight behind the growing movement calling for governmental regulation of the railroads.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the robber barons who controlled so much of the wealth and power in this country slowly felt their influence and position waning. The period of the "Gilded Age" had witnessed the massive unleashing of industrial and technological resources. This unbridled growth of American capitalism emphasized the best in innovation but the worst with respect to human suffering. In this period, the lower classes suffered the most through the bias and greed of others. As for the railroads, they were part and parcel of an industrialized system that struggled to find a balance between

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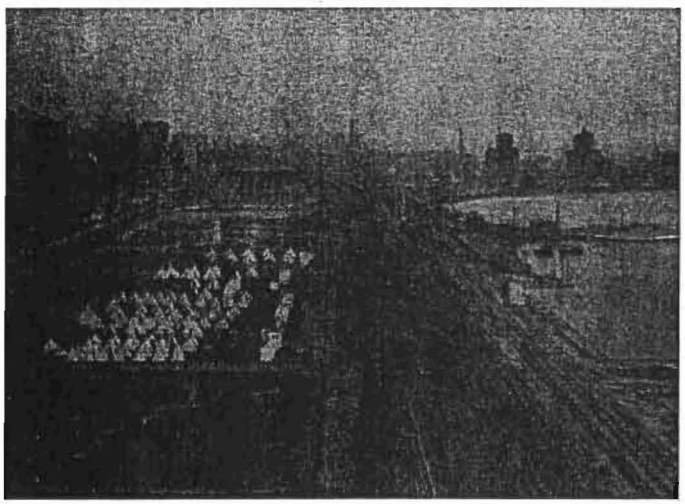
200. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895) pp. lii-liii.

profits and fair and equitable wages and benefits for their employees. Working conditions on the nation's railways were better in some respects than in other industries of their day, but the terrible injury and mortality rates decreased the advantage. Taking the various factors into consideration, one can begin to understand the complexity of issues that were involved in this period of our history and see why there was so much labor unrest and turmoil during this era. The real challenge for any historian working in the nineteenth century time frame is seeking objectivity in the face of the emotions and hyperbolic rhetoric of the day.

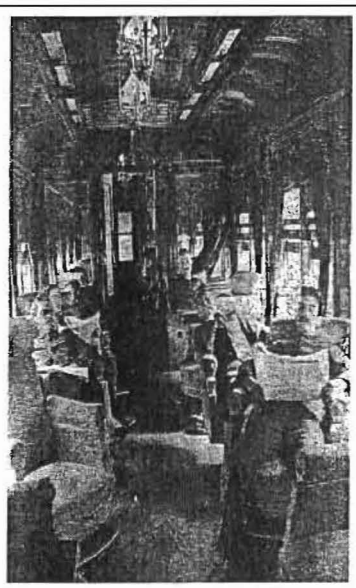
Federal Troops in and Around Chicago



Left

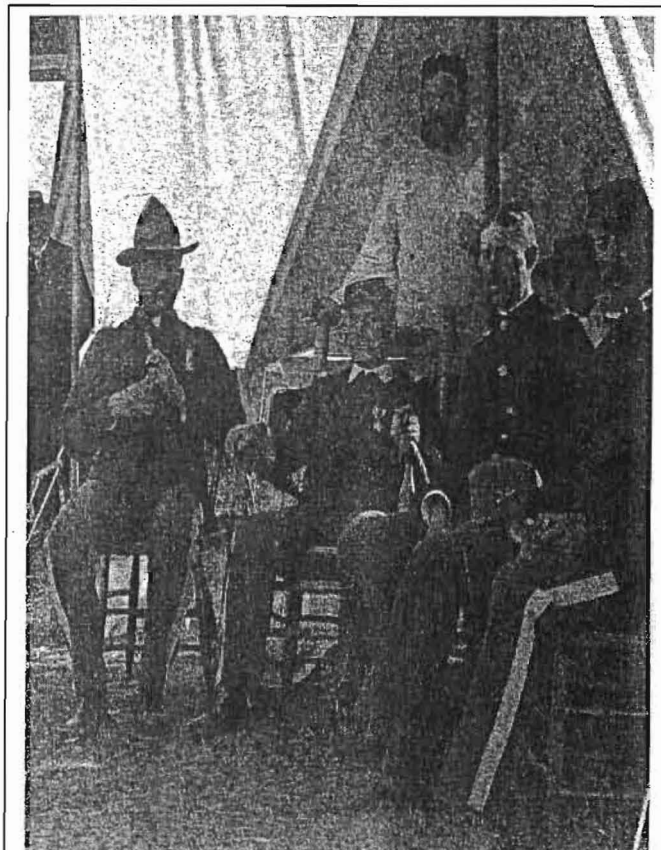
Federal Troops Camped at Lake Front Park between Monroe & 12th Street

Chicago Historical Society Photo



Above

Federal Troops Riding in Pullman Cars Chicago Historical Society Photo



Above Right

Federal Troops Camped at Pullman Chicago Historical Society Photo

State Troops and Political Figures

Left

Illinois National Guard

Second Infantry

Stationed at

Baseball Park

Logan

&

Halsted Streets

Chicago Historical Society Photo

Below

Mayor John P. Hopkins of Chicago
Acting Mayor during the Chicago Strike
Chicago Historical Society Photo

Above

Governor John P. Altgeld of Illinois
Born outside the United States of German ancestry

Invoked the wrath of the Nation for pardoning the three remaining Haymarket conspirators.
Opposed the use of Federal Troops in Illinois on legal and constitutional grounds.
Chicago Historical Society Photo

Part III - A Turning Point for the Nation

Chapter I

RAMIFICATIONS OF THE CHICAGO STRIKE

Over the years, the numbers of strikes and boycotts in the United States have declined.[201] This has happened in part because of better understanding between management and labor balanced with labor laws and arbitration. In the view of the author, a strike is a tool of last resort. They should be used when all else fails and there's nothing left to lose by initiating a strike. Undeniably, in the case of the Pullman Shop workers, calling a strike was completely justifiable. The Pullman shop workers had their backs against the wall. Their wages had been cut to the point that they could not survive. The Pullman employees acted with control and restraint during the strike. The American Railway Union displayed a high degree of compassion for the Pullman workers. However, this compassion was misguided. The rank and file of the ARU failed to heed the advice of its own leadership and initiated the Pullman boycott. This action contributed to uniting the railroads and business interests against the union. It produced a national showdown and led to a decline of unionism on American railroads. A nationwide railroad strike would not happen again until 1922.

From a historical prospective, the Chicago Strike was more than a defeat for labor. It profoundly hurt the nation as well. In reality, both labor and capital lost immensely through this action. The American Railway Union lost footholds they gained from the Great Northern Strike. After the Chicago Strike, the union was crushed since many of its members were blacklisted and never able to return to railroad employment. For the railroads, the losses were staggering. Property damage ran excessively high. The U.S. Strike commission estimated losses to railway companies at $685,308 with a loss of earnings listed at $4,672,916. [202] As evident in the following pages, actual losses to railroad

201. *Information Please Almanac*, 50TH Edition (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company1997)p. 70.
202. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. xviii.

companies ran even higher. The railroads had no way of recovering their losses because of insurance loopholes and the unwillingness to sue local municipalities. They also lost valuable personnel and experience. The business community, especially manufactures and shippers, suffered big losses. These business losses intensified the depression that had been underway since 1893.

In the last phase of this document, more emphasis will be put on analyzing the data from the previous pages and proving the main thesis of this work. As already stated, the Chicago Strike did more than hurt organized labor. The victory for railroad management was not a victory at all because it focused attention on the growing abuse and complaints by its workers. The Pullman episode added one more nail to the coffin of upcoming railroad regulations. The Chicago Strike hurt almost every sector of economic life and further polarized segments of our society.

In the final phase of this document, some earlier materials may reappear. The complexity of the strike makes it difficult to follow. Many events moved simultaneously and at different levels. The material following the "Ramification" section contains six other sections. Within these sections, a limited amount of new evidence will be presented. Hopefully, this will provide the reader with a better understanding of this work. The conclusion will illustrate the major factors that triggered change by the Chicago Strike, allowing the reader insight into some of the social-historical problems of late nineteenth century America. Without this assessment, it would be difficult to grasp the true meaning and significance of labor unrest in this era.

Economic Effect of the Chicago Strike on the Nation

From the very beginning of labor movements in the United States, many business leaders have opposed the principle of collective bargaining. They viewed labor unions as dangerous elements that, if allowed to succeed, would undermine the principles of free commerce and an open democracy. These same individuals felt their business was completely their own and could be run in any fashion they chose, whether or not it hurt or infringed upon the rights of

others. What these business leaders failed to respect was the dignity and self-worth of the persons they employed. Paying employees a living wage and entering into fair negotiations with them preserves the principles of free business and commerce. What little control that is lost through negotiations is gained in a more productive workforce and a spirit of cooperation.

What happened in the Pullman Strike is a dilemma that occurred countless times in the nineteenth century. Repeated strikes and labor unrest gripped the country. The large corporations had the resources to fight unionism, but what they achieved through this action was a bitter harvest. In looking at the Pullman strike and boycott from a purely economic viewpoint, it would have been more efficient and productive in the long run to reach some sort of settlement with the workers. The cost of the Chicago strike far exceeds any benefits to the Pullman Company, the railroads, manufactures, farmers, shippers, and suppliers of this country. The following statistics from the strike will bear this out.

TABLE II

Estimate of Losses Causes by the Chicago Strike	
Loss of Wages	$28,000,000
Cost to the Country Each Day	$2,300,000
Unemployment Numbers Due to the Unrest	50,000

Taken from the Chicago Tribune, July 8, 1894, The Pullman Strike Scrapbook, Newbery Library Chicago The Tribune believed this estimate to be on the low side.

TABLE III

Losses According to the U. S. Strike Commission Report	
Railroads	
Property Destroyed	$685,308
Loss of Railroad Earnings	$4,672,916
Loss of Wages	$1,389,143
Pullman Workers	
Loss of Wages	$350,000

* Taken From, Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895), p. xviii.

TABLE IV

Damage Done By The Insurrection	
National Losses to the U. S.	
Losses to Business Community	$26,000,000
Losses to Railroads	$8,000,000
Lost Wages	$47,000,000
Total Losses	$81,000,000

* Taken from an address by Joseph Nimmo, Jr., before the National Statistical Association at Colombia University, Oct 9th 1894, p. 10.

This statistical information provides a good cross-section of estimates. Regardless of which sample you prefer, the losses seam to be evenly distributed. The biggest losers were to those in the business community and individual wage earners. An idea of the personal loss in the strike is evident in a telegram sent to Governor Altgeld from the Union County Fruit and Vegetable Growers

Association dated July 2, 1894. The association urged the governor to use his authority to enjoin the Illinois Central Railroad to ship their produce to market. They estimated their loss at $30,000.00 a day.[203] The railroads took their share of losses as well. Losses were not proportionate to all companies. The Rock Island and the Illinois Central had larger amounts of track and equipment damage. Some of the worst rioting and burning took place on those lines.

Several possible alternative solutions to the strike were suggested. The best solution came from the Reverend William H. Carwardine. The Reverend proposed that a one-half percent reduction in dividends be applied to the payroll of the Pullman shop workers. This represented a cost of $114,000 to the Pullman Company.[204] The company could have easily absorbed this cost, considering that they had a $4,000,000 surplus from the previous year.[205] This small investment on the part of the company would have alleviated much of the pain and suffering of the employees while avoiding the grief and hostilities of a nationwide railroad strike.

The Effect of the Chicago Strike on Future Regulations of Railroads

The refusal of the GMA of Chicago to negotiate with the American Railway Union sparked the wrath of the U.S. Strike Commission. The commission believed this attitude to be inappropriate for the health and security of such a vital industry. The commission stated the following:

> The policy of both the Pullman Company and the Railway Managers' Association in reference to applications to arbitrate closed the door to all attempts at conciliation and settlement of differences. The commission is impressed with the belief, by the evidence and by attendant circumstances as disclosed, that a different policy would have prevented the loss of life and great loss of property and wages associated with the strike. [206]

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203. *The John P. Altgeld Collection*, Illinois State Archives, Box Telegrams 1894
204. Carwardine H. William, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company 1894)p. 55.
205. Ibid. p. 58.
206. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. xlii.

THE GOVERNMENT MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS

After the Chicago Strike, the U.S. Strike Commission made their final recommendations to Congress and the President. The commission called for the United States courts to compel railroads to obey the decisions of the ICC and urged that no delays in obeying the decisions of the commission be allowed pending appeal.[207] A few years later, Congress would pass key groundbreaking legislation that would forever change how railroads would run and operate. In 1903, the Elkins Act was signed into law. This act prohibited special rates and rebates for shippers. The railroads had to publish their rates at regular intervals and could charge only the published rates. In 1906, the Hepburn Act expanded regulatory control to pipelines, petroleum transportation, and the railroad sleeping car industry. In 1910 the Mann-Elkins Act became law and greatly strengthened the power of the ICC. In 1913, the U.S. Department of Labor began intervening in labor disputes by providing arbitration. All of this legislation slowly began to transform railroad business policy that had been in force since the conception of U.S. railroads. As one railroad accountant told the author, "The railroads brought regulation upon themselves."[208] Listed below is a fairly comprehensive table showing key labor reforms in the years they were enacted.

207. Ibid. p. liii.

208. *Interview with Don Brunnert*, Retire Accountant Santa Fe Railroad, Interviewed by David Swindell, November 12, 2001.

Table V, Time Line of Important Railroad Legislation

Safety Appliance Acts 1893-1903 Implemented Under U. S. Code, Title 45 Chapter 1, Section 1-9	Required the Following: • Air Breaking System • Grab irons • Automatic Couplers • 50% Air Brakes On All Trains
Erdman Act 1898	Provided For Arbitration And Mediation In Labor Disputes
Elkins Act 1903	Made The Following Changes: • Prohibited Rebates And Special Rates For Favored Customers. • Railroads Had To Publish Rates
Hepburn Act 1906	Brought The Following Industries Under Federal Regulation • Petroleum And Pipeline • Sleeping Car Industry
Mann-Elkins Act 1910	Expanded The Regulatory Power Of The ICC
Newlands Act 1913	Helped Create The U.S. Department Of Labor. Also Formed The U. S. Conciliation Service To Mediate Labor Disputes.
Adamson Act Of 1916	Dictated An Eight-Hour Work Day For Railroad Employees
Railway Labor Act 1926	Gave Railroad Employees The Right To Organize And Conduct Union Business. Also Provided For Arbitration Proceeding In Railroad Labor Disputes.
Norris LaGuardia Act 1932	• Full Freedom Of Association • Ended Yellow Dog Contracts • Prohibited The Issuance Of Injunctions In Strikes, With Exceptions

* Information for Table V extracted from *Collier's Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, (New York: P. F. Collier's & Son 1954), pp. 39-47.

THE QUESTION OF SAFETY

Although safety issues did not figure prominently in the Pullman strike, they did surface in key deliberations before the commission. In testimony before the U.S. Strike Commission, Dr. John Mclean summarized the number and types of industrial accidents in the Pullman shops. Dr. Mclean served as the Pullman Company doctor between 1884-1894. In that time span, the doctor treated 4,155 individuals for work-related injuries.[209] Out of four thousand plus injuries, over half required leave of two days or more. This represents an injury rate of 415.5 per year. Comparing this figure with a base employment figure of 5,223 for the year 1890, equates to 7.95% of the Pullman workforce injured in a single year. This high injury rate was typical for nineteenth-century industrial standards in America. The accident rate reflected poor safety standards and little in the way of worker protection. Although many of these accidents were minor, the high degree of occurrence would never be accepted today.

The death and injury rates for railroad workers were even more appalling. In 1884, there were 2,349 deaths and 5,866 injuries on the nation's railways.[210] Many of these deaths and injuries were attributed to the lack of modernization of equipment. With the passage of the Safety Appliance Acts in 1893, 1903, and 1910, the number of accidents to railway workers dropped dramatically. This claim is backed up in the Annual Reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission. From 1894 to 1897, accidents decreased. In 1898-1900, the accident and death rates increased because of increased traffic and the introduction of less experienced workers.[211]

The greatest source of accidents to railroad workers was the process of coupling and uncoupling of equipment. This part of railroad operation was extremely dangerous due to the lack of installation of automatic couplers on the early equipment. The annual reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission verify this fact in the tables listed below. Graph I and Table VII, indicate that

209. *Report on the Chicago Strike June July 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1895)p. 487.
210. *Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics* (New York: George Routledge and Sons 1884)p.381.

automatic couplers decreased the number of accidents. The advent of the Safety Appliance Acts brought the question of coupling and other related matters pertaining to railroad safety to the forefront. This safety legislation saved lives and forced railroad owners to make the required changes for the betterment of railway workers. This single instance shows the significance and importance of early governmental regulation of the U.S. railroads and the impact they had.

TABLE VI

Deaths and Accident For Railroad Employees in the U. S. 1889-1900

Year	Killed	Injured	Killed + -	Injured + -
1889	1,972	20,028	----------	----------
1890	2,451	22,396	+479	+2,368
1891	2,660	26,140	+209	+3,744
1892	2,554	28,267	-106	+2,127
1893	2,727	31,729	+173	+3,462
1894	1,823	23,422	-173	-8,307
1895	1,811	25,696	-12	+2,274
1896	1,861	29,969	+50	+4,273
1897	1,693	27,667	-168	-2,302
1898	1,958	31,761	+265	+4,100
1900	2,540	39,571	+330	+4,648

Taken from the Seventh & Fourteenth Annual Reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission, December1 & 24, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1893 & 1900), pp. 266 & 269.

211. Seventeenth Annual Report of the Interstate Commerce Commission, December 15, 1903, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1903)p. 97.

TABLE VI A

Deaths and Injury Rates U. S. Railroads 1890-1899

Ratio for Deaths and Injuries to R. R. Employees			
Year	Number Employed to One Killed	Number Employed to One Injured	Total Number Employed U.S.R.R.
1890	306 to 1	33 to 1	749,301
1891	296 to 1	30 to 1	784,285
1892	322 to 1	29 to 1	821,415
1893	320 to 1	28 to 1	873,602
1894	428 to 1	33 to 1	_____
1895	433 to 1	31 to 1	_____
1896	444 to 1	28 to 1	_____
1897	486 to 1	30 to 1	_____
1898	447 to 1	28 to 1	_____
1899	420 to 1	27 to 1	_____

Taken from *Third-Fourteenth Annual Reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission*, Washington: Government Printing Office 1889-1901).

The figures in tables VI & VI A reflect death and injury rates for railroad employees in the specified years. In reality, mortality and injury rates were much higher when all categories of railroad accidents were counted. This included deaths and injuries to passengers, crossing accidents, and miscellaneous mishaps. These tables do not offer percentage values for deaths and injuries. The values are very low and in no way show the entire picture. For example, in 1893, the number of deaths of railroad employees was 2727. According to ICC reports there were 873,602 railroad workers nationwide during that year. The percentage of railroad workers killed in 1893 was .312%. This figure is less than one percent. However, percent alone does not tell the entire story. The loss of almost three thousand men in a single year is a calamity, whatever the size of the workforce. The loss of these men in 1893 and all the losses of railroad

personnel in subsequent years represented a huge void. This void was felt not only in the railroad companies but also to nineteenth century society as a whole.

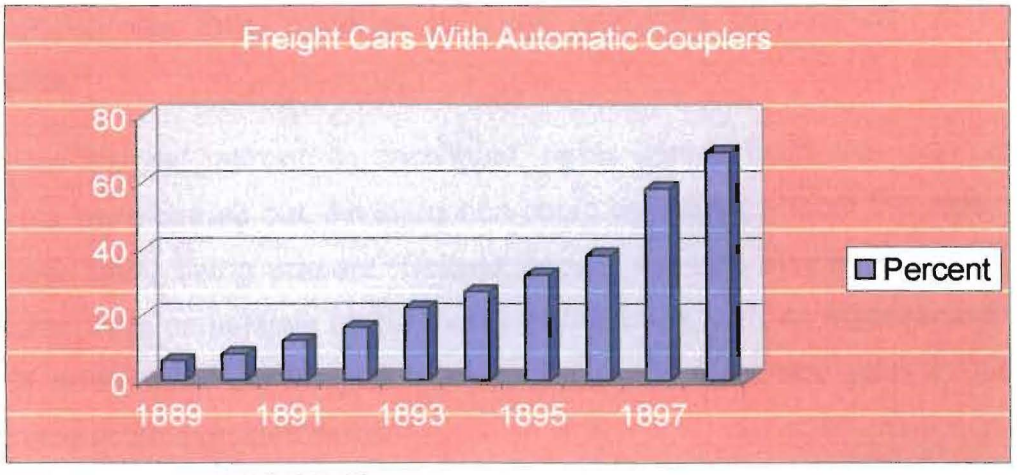
TABLE VII

Deaths and Accidents to Railroad Employees While Coupling and Uncoupling Equipment on U.S. Railroads, 1893-1900

Year	Killed	Injured	Killed + -	Injured + -
1893	423	11,227	----------	----------
1894	251	7,240	-182	-3,987
1895	291	8,137	+40	+897
1896	229	8,457	-62	+320
1897	214	6,283	-15	-2,174
1898	279	6,988	+65	+705
1899	260	6,765	-19	-223
1900	281	5,211	+21	-1,554

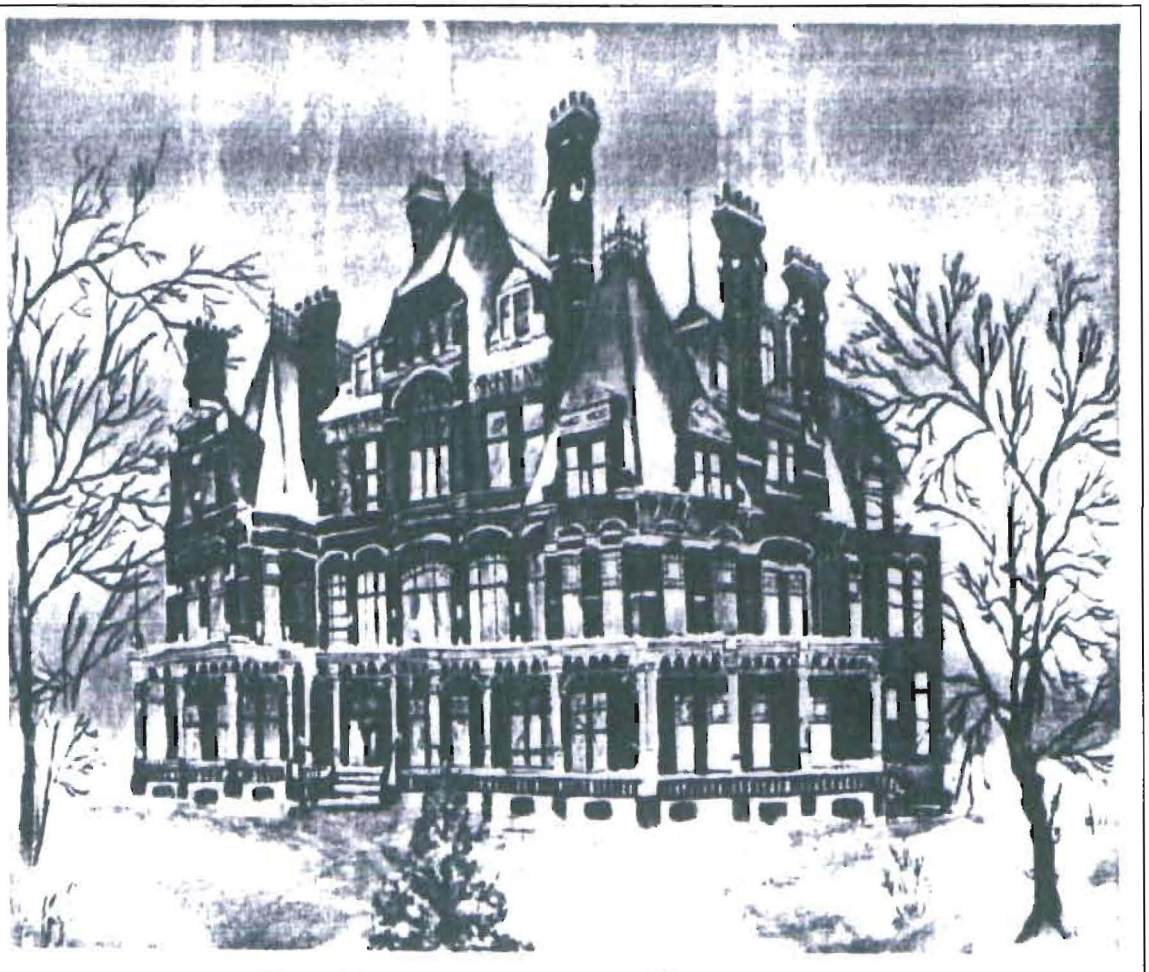
Taken from Fourteenth Annual Report of the Interstate Commerce Commission, December 24, 1900, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1901) p. 269.

GRAPH II



* Taken from the *Twelfth Annual Report of the Interstate Commerce Commission*, January 11, 1899, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1899), p. 245.

to come. Meanwhile, the town is making a comeback from near destruction in the 1980s. The Florence Hotel is being restored, as are many of the private homes.



Hotel Florence in 1883 • Pullman, Illinois

Christmas Card, Pullman Trust & Savings Bank 1952
Painting by Jack Simmerling
Clip Art Collection
Chicago Public Library

CONCLUSION

The years following the Chicago Strike taught many lessons in terms of human, social, legal, and economic costs. The Chicago Strike had wounded the nation. The cost to labor and the railroads was immense. The cost to society was even higher. Out of the ashes of this labor conflict came the realization that things would never be the same. America had turned an important and painful corner. Over the next four decades, the government, capital and labor, would struggle to reach an acceptable compromise to the labor issue. The legislation that emerged from this period would leave a lasting impression, affecting the very soul of the American free enterprise system.

One event of significance following the Chicago Strike was the release of the U.S. Strike Commission Report in 1895. The commission's recommendations had far-reaching influence on the judiciary and individual legislators. Although the strike commission findings were unpopular with a majority of Americans, the commissions' work laid the groundwork for subsequent legislation. Richard Olney, the Attorney General during the Chicago Strike, drafted key elements from the Wright Bill into the Erdman Act of 1898.[214]

The process of judicial reforms that began in late nineteenth century America were instrumental in recognizing the rights of labor to organize and represent workers on an economic and collective scale.[215] Unfortunately, these early cases were the exception rather than the prevailing rule of law. In the cases established during the Chicago Strike, the old legal system base on the principles of "Free Labor" and Victorian concepts of property rights prevailed. This produced a sharp divide between the old legal order and the new legal theory that was developing. The periods directly after the strike helped intensify and widen the debate concerning the rights of labor unions for many years to come.

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214. The Wright Bill introduced by commissioner Carol Wright, called for the ending of certain unfair labor practices. His bill also called for the formation of a permanent arbitration board. Found in HR 8259, Fifth Third Congress, Third Session.

215. See the following cases: *Waterhouse et al vs. Coner*, Federal Reporter 55 (1893): pp. 59-149. Author et al vs. Oaks et al, Federal Reporter 63 (1894): pp. 29-310. *Ames et al vs. Pacific Railroad*, Federal Reporter 64 (1894): pp. 14-15.

The Pullman Strike also helped focus public attention on the abuses at the Chicago facility. For many years, the American Shop System was under fire for its long hours and low pay under oppressive physical and mental conditions. The testimony of the Pullman employees before the U.S. Strike Commission revealed many of the same complaints experienced nationally. These included the following: abusive behavior by foremen, management that allowed unscrupulous supervisors free reign in dealing with employee matters, and an unfair wage policy. In addition, the testimonies of Dr. John McLean and Rev. William Carwardine were especially revealing. Rev. Carwardine gave detailed accounts of unjust treatment by the Pullman Company of its employees. The focus of these hearings did little to alleviate conditions, but the public disclosure added to a growing concern for business regulation throughout the country. It would take many more years, and a tragedy such as the Triangle Shirt Company fire, to finally awaking the country to the concerns of workers everywhere.

One profound change to come out of the Chicago Strike was the public's perception of the working class. It was assumed in Victorian culture that an individual could always achieve success through diligence and hard work. In other words, you could always pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. Many individuals during this time felt that the unemployed were shiftless vagabonds and tramps that were simply too lazy to hold down an honest day's work. When the depression of 1893 brought massive layoffs and business foreclosures, this notion was challenged. With the many press accounts about the starvation and deprivations of the Pullman workers both during and after the strike, these attitudes began to soften. The fact that George Pullman would not rehire many of his former employees also sent a message to the public that outside influences sometimes play a part in determining how and when a person can obtain work. Although much of the public thought George Pullman was vindicated and completely within his rights in dealing with his employees on these matters, growing numbers of people began to see the darker side of his motives.

With the demise of the American Railroad Union and the Knights of Labor in the Chicago Strike, the Brotherhoods became the undisputed leader of American railroad unions. The Brotherhood Organizations came to this position by outmaneuvering other unions and through cooperation with railroad management during strikes and labor disturbances. The dominance of the Brotherhood organizations remains to this very day.

America Finds Its Way

The transition from the Gilded Age's economic and social policies into the progressive era proved rigorous for the nation. This was a period of flux between complete unrestricted economic freedom and implementation of regulations and controls. America had to struggle to find a middle ground between the rights of workers and the needs of business and commerce. Corporations had to find innovative ways to own and use private property in business while balancing with social concerns for workers. What finally resolved many of these issues was the intervention of the federal government as a fair and just arbiter. Rather than just put down strikes and labor disputes because of public inconvenience or business losses; the government began to act on the root causes of these disputes. They brought both capital and labor together into a framework of settlement and stability.

Learning to Value Workers and Community Responsibility

In looking at the Chicago Strike through the eyes of the participants, one must truly appreciate the risks the Pullman workers undertook in trying to create a more fair and secure future for themselves and their families. If anything should be learned from the Chicago Strike, it is that all workers are entitled to a great measure of respect. The Chicago Strike was one of a series of confrontations, whereby social responsibilities to workers were not met. The concept of setting fair standards for employees was a slow evolving process in the American business community. What this all boils down to is that portions of the American business community failed to properly care for their own. This was a hard lesson

for our country. In essence we are our brother's keepers. The world of business is not just about profits; it is also about people. Proper balance must be maintained between the good of the corporation and that of the employee. From a historical and social perspective, the Chicago Strike represented a unique microcosm of human interaction.

As America experienced the effects of the Industrial Revolution, a series of adjustments had to take place in society. The growing pains associated with this era brought confrontation and division. What finally prevailed in the capital versus labor dispute was a sense of fairness. While labor disputes have not disappeared altogether, the playing field is now more level. The significance of the Chicago strike cannot be underestimated in the transformation of US labor policies. For this reason, the strike served as a major watershed in labor history.

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