

1-8-2016

The Haymarket Disaster and the Knights of Labor

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Recommended Citation

Pulkrabek, Payton, "The Haymarket Disaster and the Knights of Labor" (2016). *Curriculum Unit on the Gilded Age in the United States*. 18.
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Title: The Haymarket Disaster and the Knights of Labor

Adaptor: Payton Pulkrabek

Adapted from: Evaluating Conflicting Evidence: History Detectives by PBS LearningMedia

Grade Levels: 9-12

Time: One class period of 50-60 minutes

Focus Statement: During the Gilded Age, numerous political, social, economic, and cultural reforms were taking place all at once. One of the major reforms of the time was labor because of the problems workers and their employers had with each other. Up until the 1860s, most Americans either worked on a farm or ventured into the city to obtain an industrial position in a cut-throat factory. Life working in the factories was hard and lacked regulation. Child labor, instant job termination, low and unreliable wages, and long hours were the common job expectation. It was not until grassroots movements and labor organizations, such as the Knights of Labor, started forming that workers finally began having a voice. While the Knights of Labor started out small with the members having common goals, the organization grew rapidly into a diverse membership including everyone from factory workers to shop owners. The disagreement over the preference of strikes instead of unions led to the Haymarket Disaster on May 4th, 1886. This incident occurred in Haymarket Square in Chicago when anarchists threw a bomb into the police line. While eight police officers were killed and eight anarchists were tried for murder, no one to this day knows who threw the bomb.

The National Council for History Education recommends that students develop several habits of mind as they study history and the one we will attempt to build in this lesson is to understand the impact made by individuals, groups, and institutions. Not only will students understand the impact, but also look at these groups at a local, national, and global level both in effecting change and in ensuring continuity. In this lesson, students will be examining the institution of labor and the workers' (individuals) response to the institutions. Students will be performing this task by looking at primary source documents and analyzing the individual's responses to the factory owners and government officials. Students will look at how the government (institutions) treated workers in return in order to better grasp the relationship workers had with their employers during this time.

MN Standard:

Minnesota Standard 9/12 4.20. As the United State shifted from its agrarian roots into an industrial and global power, the rise of big business, urbanization and immigration led to institutionalized racism, ethnic and class conflict and new efforts at reform. (Development of an Industrial United States: 1870-1920)

Minnesota Standard Benchmark 9/12/4.20.1 Explain how technological innovation, heavy industrialization, and intensified boom-bust cycles of an unregulated capitalist economy led to changes in the nature of work, economic scale and productivity, the advent of the modern

corporation, and the rise of national labor unions. (Development of an Industrial United States: 1870-1920)

Learning Objective(s):

- Students will be able to explain the purpose of the Knights of Labor.
- Students will be able to analyze primary source documents to identify and explain a problem in the past.

Resources:

- Chalkboard/Dry erase board
- Access to a computer with internet, projector
- Primary source material
- Scratch paper

Methods/Procedures:

Beginning (15 minutes):

- Begin the class by asking the class if they or anyone they know is in a union. If no one responds, explain what a union is. If students do respond, ask them what professions they or the people they know of in a union are in.
- Explain to students that unions began during the time period of the Gilded Age. Although unions have their positive and negative attributes, they were once a much needed organization.
- Begin describing the working conditions of the 1860s (long hours, non-equal pay, child labor, ability to get fired on the spot for no reason, unreliable wages) and list them on a chalkboard.
- Explain that the labor organization Knights of Labor was founded in 1869 in order to combat all of the negative working condition issues listed above. Before the Knights of Labor, there wasn't really one organized group that was taken seriously by employers. The Knights of Labor was sort of revolutionary for this day age. Have students imagine what it would be like if half of the people with jobs in the U.S. all seriously united together and confronted their employers with their wants and demands. What would happen? Describe the ideas and beliefs of the Knights of Labor (organization for the people by the people, eight hour work day regulation, equal pay for all genders and ages, a national income tax, preference of peaceful boycotts over violent strikes). Even though the Knights of Labor had good intentions, the organization grew too large, leading to differing opinions due to the variety of members. When an organization has multiple opinions, chaos can occur. An example of this chaos could be the Haymarket Riot. Lead into the Haymarket riot.
- Show 5 minute YouTube video explaining the Haymarket riots. Be sure to explain and emphasize certain points along the way.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OQxncb2ihQ

Middle: Instructional Strategies/Learning Activities (25-30 minutes)

- Divide students into groups of five. These will be called their home groups. Have the students physically move to sit with their home groups. Once moved and seated, have each home group number off 1-5. Students will be completing a jigsaw activity in which each home group member departs to look at different sources with a subgroup and then comes back together into their original home group at the end to share and debate their findings.
 - **Number 1's:** Students who are in this subgroup will be looking at a proclamation to the people of Chicago from the Mayor of Chicago. This was written May 5th, 1886, two days after the Haymarket bombing.
 - **Number 2's:** Students who are in this subgroup will be looking at an image depicting a proclamation signed by President Grant about the eight hour work day.
 - **Number 3's:** Students in this subgroup will be looking at an image from *The Graphic News* published in July of 1886.
 - **Number 4's:** Students in this group will be looking at an image published in Harper's Weekly in June of 1886 which questions the saying "give me liberty or give me death."
 - **Number 5's:** Students in this group will be looking at the work of political cartoonist Thomas Nast done on May 22, 1886 entitled "That's so."
- Each person in the subgroup will have their own copy of the subgroup's primary source document. When in the subgroups looking at the primary sources, students are to take notes on their own while looking at and analyzing the primary source for 3 minutes. Have students look at the date of the source, at what the tone of the source is, at what kind of people are drawn/referenced, and any other questions you may find necessary to students understanding the source.
- After giving students 3 minutes to look at the source silently on their own, allow 7 minutes for each subgroup to talk amongst itself to discuss each person's findings. If everyone in the subgroup agrees on each other's findings with time left to spare, ask students about other perspectives that could be taken from the documents or how someone from that era would have perceived the publication.
- Have each subgroup disperse back into the home group. Give each home group 15 minutes to discuss and possibly take notes on the following:
 - Have each home group member give a brief summary of their source. Each group member should display their source and physically point out details.
 - Why did the Knights of Labor begin?
 - What were the goals of the Knights of Labor?
 - Do you think the government liked the Knights of Labor?
 - What is the difference between a strike and a union?
 - Did the Haymarket Riot hurt or help the Knights of Labor's reputation and credibility?

End/Summary (10 minutes):

- Ask students to wrap up discussion. Ask students to take out a blank sheet of paper or provide them with one. On the chalkboard, write the following questions for students to answer on their paper which will be the assessment for the day:
 1. What subgroup number were you in?
 2. What was the main point or message from the primary source document you analyzed?
 3. What is one interesting thought that your home group discussed about either the Knights of Labor or the Haymarket bombing?
- Have students turn in their paper/assessment while exiting class.

Afterwards

Provisions for Individual Differences (physical, emotional, mental, language, etc.):

- Provide a bulleted list of notes from the beginning discussion/lecture about what a union was, how the Knights of Labor began, working conditions up until the 1860s.
- Have an annotated version typed out of the YouTube clip.
- Have annotated versions of each primary source.

Self-Reflection (What worked? What needs improvement? What changes would I make before doing the lesson again?)

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Chicago Historical Society
Haymarket Affair Digital Collection

Proclamation to the people of Chicago: Mayor's office, May 5, 1886.

Chicago (Ill.) Mayor.

1 broadside: 42 x 28 in.

Chicago, Ill.: Jno. B. Jeffrey Printing & Engraving Co., 1886.

(CHS ICHI 31325)

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Number 1's

Retrieved from:

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/hadc/visuals/05V0660.htm>

PROCLAMATION
TO THE PEOPLE OF CHICAGO:
MAYOR'S OFFICE, Chicago, May 5, 1886.

WHEREAS, Great excitement exists among the people of this good city, growing out of the **LABOR TROUBLES**, which excitement is intensified by the open defiance of the guardians of the peace by a body of lawless men, who, under the pretense of aiding the laboring men, are really endeavoring to destroy all law. And Whereas, last night these men, by the use of weapons never resorted to in **CIVILIZED LANDS, EXCEPT IN TIMES OF WAR** or for **REVOLUTIONARY PURPOSES, CAUSED GREAT BLOODSHED AMONG CITIZENS AND AMONG OFFICERS** of the **MUNICIPALITY** who were simply in the performance of their duties. And Whereas, the **CITY AUTHORITIES PROPOSE TO PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY AT ALL HAZARDS**, and in doing so will be compelled to break up all unlawful or dangerous gatherings; and

WHEREAS, Even when men propose to meet for lawful purposes, bad men will attempt to mingle with them, armed with cowardly missiles, for the purpose of bringing about bloodshed, thus endangering innocent persons;

THEREFORE, I, Carter H. Harrison, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM THAT GATHERINGS OF PEOPLE IN CROWDS OR PROCESSIONS IN THE STREETS and PUBLIC PLACES OF THE CITY ARE DANGEROUS AND CANNOT BE PERMITTED, AND ORDERS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO THE POLICE TO PREVENT ALL SUCH GATHERINGS and TO BREAK UP and DISPERSE ALL CROWDS, TO PREVENT INJURY TO INNOCENT PERSONS.

I urge all law-abiding people to quietly attend to their own affairs, and not to meet in crowds. If the police order any gatherings to disperse, and they be not obeyed, all persons so disobeying will be treated as law-breakers, and will surely incur the penalty of their disobedience.

I further assure the good people of Chicago that I believe the police can protect their lives and property and the good name of Chicago, and WILL do so.

CARTER H. HARRISON, Mayor.



Chicago Historical Society
Haymarket Affair Digital Collection

National eight hour law: proclamation / U.S. Grant.

United States. President (1869-1877 :Grant)

1 broadside: ill.; 21 x 25 in.

[S.l.: s.n., 1870]

Signed by U.S. Grant, President and Hamilton Fish, Secretary of State.
(CHS ICHI 20072)

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Number 2's

Retrieved from: <http://www.chicagohistory.org/hadc/visuals/01V0530.htm>

Number 3's

Retrieved from:

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/hadc/visuals/61V0300.htm>



Chicago Historical Society
Haymarket Affair Digital Collection

Justice hurling a bomb.

Cassidy, A.R.

Graphic news. Vol. 1, no. 14 (June 5, 1886)

Chicago, Ill.: The Graphic news, 1886.

p. 220: ill.; 40 x 27 cm.

Wood engraving.

(CHS ICHi 16071)

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Liberty or death.

Nast, Thomas, 1840-1902.

Harper's weekly. Vol. 30, no. 1537 (June 5, 1886)

New York: Harper and Brothers, 1886.

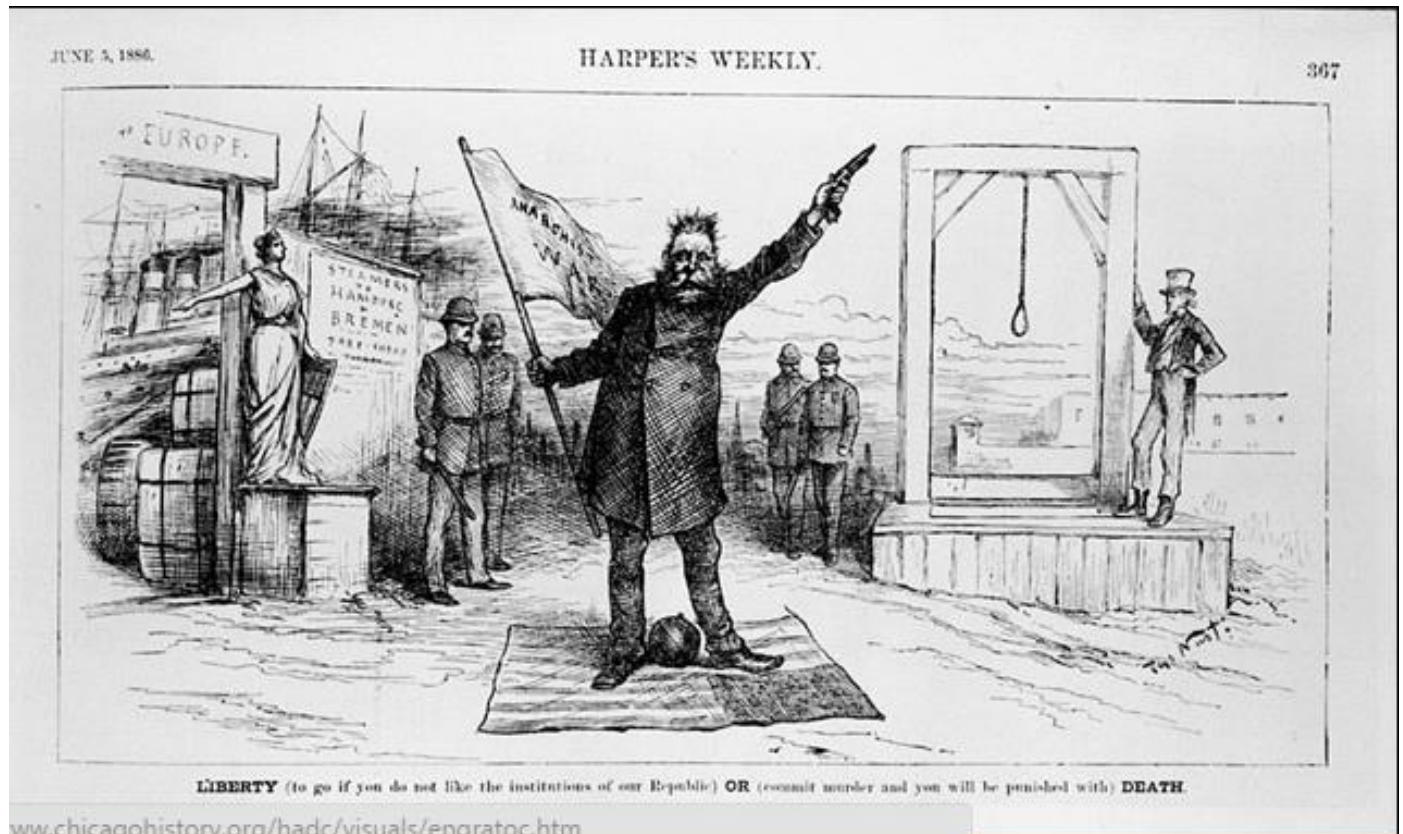
p.367: ill.; 12 x 25 cm.

Caption reads: LIBERTY (to go if you do not like the institutions of our republic) OR (commit murder and you will be punished with) DEATH.

Wood engraving.

(CHS ICHi 03666)

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Number 4's

Retrieved from:

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/hadc/visuals/62V0350.htm>



That's so.

Nast, Thomas, 1840-1902.

[New York, NY: s.n., 1886]

India ink drawing on paper; study for wood engraving.

Published in Harper's weekly,. Vol. 30, no. 1535 (May 22, 1886)

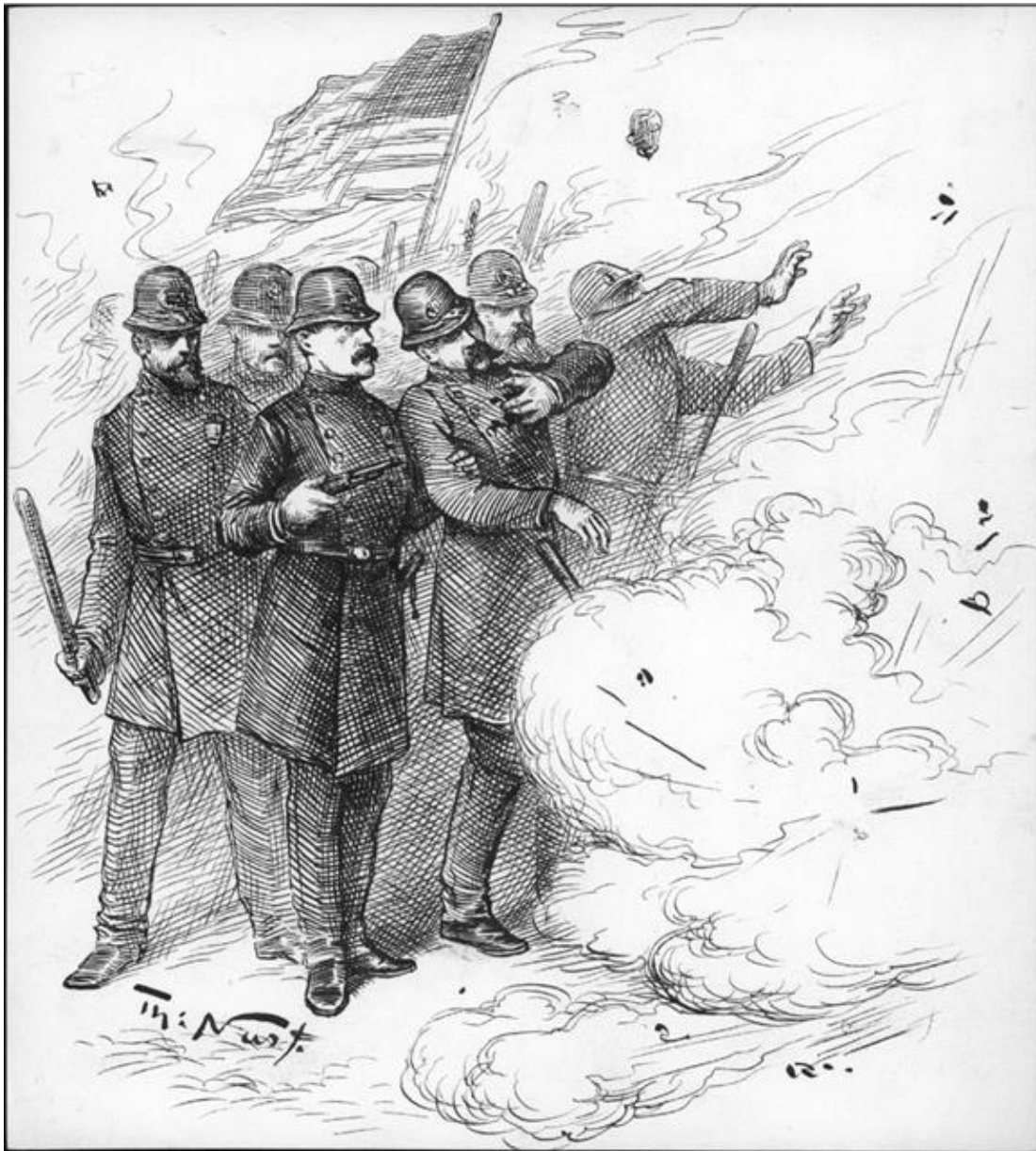
(CHS ICHi 14900)

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Number 5's

Retrieved from:

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/hadc/visuals/60V0650.htm>



Name: _____

Haymarket Riot Primary Sources

List five things you see:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List three things you can infer or take away from this source:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Think of three questions you still have after looking at this source.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Name: _____

Haymarket Riot and Knights of Labor Assignment

1. Why did the Knights of Labor begin?
2. What were the goals of the Knights of Labor?
3. Do you think the government liked the Knights of Labor?
4. What is the difference between a strike and a union?
5. Did the Haymarket Riot hurt or help the Knights of Labor's reputation and credibility?
6. What subgroup number were you in?
7. What was the main point or message from the primary source document you analyzed?
8. What is one interesting thought that your home group discussed about either the Knights of Labor or the Haymarket bombing?