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Period 2

Historical Figure Research Paper

Andrew Carnegie’s Footprints

Steel is one of the most commonly used metals in the world, used to make anything from suspension bridges and skyscrapers to nails and screws. The history of this steel, on how it became so popular, though, comes from none other than Andrew Carnegie. Andrew Carnegie was the ultimate man for business, and even for founding different places and his morals. His footprints are still present in our life today. Because he created an extremely successful steel business from nothing which soon started the Homestead strike, founded the Carnegie public library, and established Carnegie Mellon University, Carnegie Hall, and more, Andrew Carnegie has affected the nation, the world, and society both positively and negatively.

To begin with, Carnegie literally came from nothing. His parents were both working class members, and his father was an excellent weaver. However, soon the steam powered loom was introduced, and his father became instantly unemployed, so they decided to move to Pittsburgh in the United States (“Carnegie” 2). Unlike several rich people in the 21st century, Carnegie had a poor background as the son of a weaver, but really made the most of what he had with him. He decided to work as a messenger in a telegraph company, and then worked for the railroad. He may have started as a railroad employee, but soon he would be the boss of another company supplying materiel to the railroad.

Soon afterwards, Carnegie took the big step of business, that distinguished him from several other individuals: he invested. He invested in first oil, then sleeping cars, and finally steel (Carnegie 5, 6, & 8). The third became a huge success, and in no time Carnegie gained an immense amount of wealth. This was due to the steel- he sold it at a very low price to the railroad companies, and it cost even less to make. Several major companies bought this steel at a fair price. In fact, Carnegie’s steel has influenced, and set the base for many steel companies today, and they use a similar budget. The United States Steel Corporation uses his methods, since they later bought Carnegie Steel Company. As Fact on File quotes, “as a result, Carnegie became the richest man in the world,” with a heaping billion dollars (3)! Although, he still kept his morals and standards, and he did not get drowned in his money. He insisted on helping the world and donating to charity.

On the contrary, while Carnegie made some wise and ethical decisions that inspired individuals, he also committed some wrongdoings. As PBS.org’s “Homestead Strike” article mentions, the Homestead Strike occurred with his company, and workers in Buffalo, New Orleans, Idaho, and Tennessee striked (3). This was due to low wages, extended hours, and dangerous working conditions, all thanks to Henry Frick, Carnegie’s business partner, who suggested these ideas. The real strike, though was at Homestead, Pennsylvania, where thousands of workers demanded a job that was safe. Although Frick was behind this, it is even more upsetting that Andrew Carnegie supported and believed him. After several miscalculations, though, he finally realized he was committing wrongdoings. He suffered losses both financially- he lost several dollars- and publically- he was known as a “hypocrite”. So, he created a large building in Homestead, which had several luxuries like a swimming pool and bowling alleys, devoted to all workers as an apology for his behavior. Carnegie may have made some foolish decisions, but he always had a heart of gold.

Furthermore, Andrew Carnegie established the Carnegie Public Library, which was different from a normal library, because he gave it to society out of his pocket. He had two main reasons for creating these free libraries for anyone. The first was so that immigrants who came to the country would easily learn about America’s history and culture, and they would not struggle like he did. He sincerely cared about the people, and wanted to look for their well-being, coming from his poor childhood. The second reason, which was his most vital reason, was because the reason the United States was at the top was for learning, and whether someone was rich or poor, they should be able to learn from reading and add to the success of Americans. In fact, Andrew Carnegie’s public libraries are still present today in multiple countries, and is used by the public, freely, for anyone who wants to learn.

Finally, even after his death, many organizations and buildings have been created in honor of Carnegie. The most famous is Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. As the US News College University Ranking states, “Carnegie Mellon University's ranking in the 2014 edition of Best Colleges is National Universities, 23.” (1) In the movie *Mean Girls 2*, the protagonist wanted to get an admission to Carnegie Mellon, and made it. Even more, our school uses Carnegie Mellon University’s robotics program for Industrial Technology Education. Furthermore, Carnegie Hall is a worldwide known musical hall in New York City, where the world’s best musicians play, and it was the final pit stop for the *Amazing Race*. Also, the Pittsburgh Steelers, who are a professional football team in the National Football League, have been named for what their city is most famous for - steel, coming from none other than Carnegie.

Overall, Andrew Carnegie has changed the U.S, the Earth, and the community due to his poor background that evolved into a prosperous steel company which had arisen the Homestead strike, and his formation of the Carnegie public library, Carnegie Mellon University, and other famous organizations and buildings. His foot print will always be remembered by everyone, both by the common people and the business companies.