

1919 Pittsburgh, The Iron Grip on the Steel Industry

Bibliography

Brown, Cliff. *Racial Conflicts and Violence in the Labor Market : Roots in the 1919 Steel Strike*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998.

This book discusses the racial tensions in America during the late 1910s and more specifically how these tensions played a massive role in the Steel Strike. In the first chapter of the book, labor tensions and racism in America are deeply explored, supplemented with primary source documents including participation and membership of black Americans in unions. Moreover, this book discusses critical mistakes involving race that members of the AFL and prominent strikers made in their decision making. More specifically, it analyzes William Foster's decision to ignore advice on the idea of giving black Americans the right to membership in the AFL. This book also discusses why black Americans were so frustrated with strikers and why many race riots in Pittsburgh occurred. For example, many race riots occurred because black Americans' role as strikebreakers in Pittsburgh further fueled division and racism in the northeast. This source is crucial to our research because it is a strong secondary source that gives lots of information on what racism looked like in 1919 Pittsburgh.

Brown, Ryan. *Pittsburgh and the Great Steel Strike of 1919*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2019.

In his book, Author Ryan Brown provides an excellent recount of the agonizing days of the Steel Strike in Pittsburgh, including events prior to and following said strike. This book details vivid background information and events that led to the build up of the strike, such as America's involvement in World War I which caused unprecedented labor shortages. Following which, these years of strife finally broke out in open conflict in 1919 as steel workers launched the biggest

strike to date. Readers are exposed to intense and strong-worded testimonials of Union Leaders and the opposing Steel Industry organizers during this time, as well as news statements with first-hand accounts of the events occurring in Pittsburgh. This book's importance is largely evident in its epilogue which perfectly summarizes how the 1919 events were the results of multiple catalysts coming together. Readers can therefore discern the greater context in which the steel strike was set, in the midst of political turmoil and a raging influenza pandemic.

Evening public ledger. [volume] (Philadelphia [Pa.]), 22 Sept. 1919. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045211/1919-09-22/ed-1/seq-22/>.

The *Evening Public Ledger*, once Philadelphia's most popular daily newspapers, published an article titled "Steel Strike All-absorbing topic in broker's offices" under their "Gossip on the street" column on September 22, 1919 - the officially declared day by the American Federation of Labor's steelworkers conference. Despite the significance of the day this was published, this article is found on the twenty second page of the issue, revealing the general public's urgency (or lack thereof) in supporting the cause of the steel strike, partially foreshadowing how the strike was doomed to fail from its initiation. Within this article, multiple perspectives from bankers and brokers are provided about the strike, specifically the eventual financial repercussions that it would likely bring. This source is valuable in that it provides a financial perspective of the conflict and gives historical context on the precise day in which the now famous (and unsuccessful) Pittsburgh steel strike took place.

Jones, and Mary Harris. "The Steel Strike of 1919." Chapter 24. In *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*, edited by Mary Field Parton, 114–31. Chicago, IL: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1925.
<https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/jones/autobiography/autobiography.html>.

Mary (Mother) Jones was a union and community leader during the 1919 Strike. Born in 1830, she was one of the co-founders of the IWW. Although the entirety of her autobiography is definitely worth reading, for the purposes of our proposal we will be focusing on chapter XXIV, which relates Mary's experience during the steel strike. In a very assertive, and somewhat

aggressive, style, Mary relates how she first got involved with the strike, the contents of her speeches, the events of her many arrests, and how the union leadership, and herself, reacted once the strike was broken. She also retells snippets of the stories of other workers during the strike, including quotes that describe: the environment of fear that hovered over the town; the wretched conditions of workers; and the outcome of a Communist Scare that targeted steel workers.

Mccormick, Charles H.. *Seeing Reds : Federal Surveillance of Radicals in the Pittsburgh Mill District, 1917-1921*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998. Accessed March 1, 2022. ProQuest Ebook Central.

In this book, Charles Mccormick recounts the history of federal surveillance in Pittsburgh during World War One and the years following. The second part of the book discusses the tactics employed by the BI to gather information on radicals and damage their organizations during the Steel Strike. For example, the BI targeted strike leader William Foster and gathered intel to tie him to radical organizations like the IWW. The goal was to damage his public image and thus the strike itself. In the process of recounting these strategies, he discusses various historical figures in the strike era that could be vital characters in our game. For example, he mentions Special Agent “Wendell” of the “Radical Squad”, who worked undercover to spy on radicals and even infiltrated the IWW. He also discusses a major target of the BI, Jacob Margolis, a lawyer who defended leftists in Pittsburgh. This novel will serve as valuable context to the government's role in the strike and provides ample background information on the status and power of radical organizations in Pittsburgh.

Witwer, David. “Commemorating the 1919 Steel Strike: An Interview with John Czelen.” Edited by Linda Shopes and Linda A. Ries. *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 86 (2019). <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.bu.edu/article/733960>.

This journal article, written around the centennial of the Pittsburgh 1919 steel strike, contains an introductory overview of the historical context of the steel strike, and an interview with John Czelen, who lived in Pittsburgh and was five years old at the time of the strike. The historical overview, written by Witwer, gives insight into the impact of World War 1 and labor unions, the scale of the strike, and the viewpoints of those involved. Witwer explains how the strikes'

successful tactics were undermined in the end by divisions among the strikers. Shopes and Ries edited the interview given by Czelen, and clarified that the interview is a subjective interpretation of what occurred, though Czelen is a prominent labor leader now and may have had the ability to properly reflect on what occurred. The interview is a valuable source of primary information as it provides a human lens of what occurred in Pittsburgh.

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