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National Labor Tribune – Nov 10, 1888

CARNEGIE'S WHITE SLAVES

HOW THE HIGH PRIEST OF PROTECTION "PROTECTS" HIS LABOURERS.

His Men Get Lower Wages and Work Longer Hours Than Any Others – Families Starving in Midwinter – Honest Men Blacklisted. His Conduct Denounced by the Knights of Labor.

Pittsburgh, Oct. 28 –Andrew Carnegie, the millionaire, the typical American protectionist, the patron of James G. Blaine, the man who prides himself on the intense Republicanism, was last Saturday night proclaimed by the Knights of Labor a "scab," the employer of unfair workmen, and his steel works at Braddock "non-union." No Knights of Labor or unionists will hereafter work in those mills without losing his self-respect and that of his fellow workmen.

Here is the resolution adopted by Local Assembly 1967, Knights of Labor, of Braddock, Pa.
Whereas, Local Assembly 1967, K. of L. since the ending of the lockout at the Edgar Thomson steel works, has used every means to have justice done to the blacklisted men of these works; and
Whereas, Andrew Carnegie has been personally appealed to and refused to interfere in having the men reinstated; therefore be it.

Resolved, That we declare the Edgar Thomson steel works non-union throughout, and advise all union men to stay away from there.

The Knights of Labor did not take this step without first using every possible means to give Andrew Carnegie a chance to undo some of the wrongs done to his workmen. Delegations from district and local assemblies have waited on him and appealed to his sense of justice, but without avail. He has ignored all petitions; his will must be done, or the workers must go without their daily bread. Mr. Carnegie has always treated his workmen as though they were his creatures – body and soul. He has always been opposed to labor organizations, and has heretofore succeeded in crushing them out of his works, because they dared to set themselves up in opposition to his will, and because they demanded that the labourers should receive some of the profits from the high tariff, which he claimed, was only levied for his particular benefit. Carnegie first drove the powerful union of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers out of Braddock. This year he has driven out the Knights of Labor, and no employee dare raise his voice against any inquiry in the mills.

Every reader remembers how 2000 workmen were locked out of the mills in Braddock because they refused to accept the terms proposed by Mr. Carnegie. Last year he ordered a reduction in wages and an increase in the hours of labor from eight to twelve a day. The men were well organized. They had four local assemblies, and stood out against the terms. Mr. Carnegie refused to listen to any proposition. His will was law, and in December – in midwinter – 2000 men, with wives and children depending on them for sustenance, were thrown into the streets. Carnegie was lord of the situation; he owned everything and everybody in Braddock. If they refused to work on the wages he was pleased to allow them, they should not work at all. No work meant to these poor creatures no bread, no fuel, no clothes. What did Czar Carnegie care? He could go to Europe, and did. His New York mansion was always open, and the cries of hungry children never penetrated the curtained doors and windows of his castle. Not only must the men work longer hours for less wages than elsewhere said the Czar, but they must sign a cast-iron agreement to remain his subjects until 1890, and any one violating the agreement would render himself liable to arrest and imprisonment. Nor labor organisation was to be tolerated within the sacred precincts of Braddock.

All through January, February, March and April the 2000 men stood firm. Only \$2500 were received from the outside during this time. Cold and hunger were relied upon by the Czar and his generals to fight their battles, and the men were of course, vanquished. Before surrendering

unconditionally, the officers of District Assembly No. 3, of this city tried to compromise with Manager Jones, Carnegie's commander, and offered four propositions. That the cast-iron agreement be withdrawn, that the committees be recognized as heretofore in reference to any grievance that might arise; that all union men thrown idle by the two-turn agreement be provided for in Carnegie's other mills, and that a general amnesty be declared on both sides. The K. of L. not to demand the discharge of any blacksheep; the firm not to discriminate against any union man, however active in the strike.

Two hours were spend in discussing the propositions. Number one was the stumbling block, Captain Jones declaring to the men that he had no power to withdraw it, but assuring them if they go to work all the objectionable features of the iron-clad agreement would be obviated at once. Relying on Captain Jones' word of honor, and upon his acceptance of the other three propositions, Master Workman Doyle declared the strike off, and the mill was opened I n May; but every man who returned to work had to sign the cast-iron agreement. Not one of the objectionable features was obviated, and the promise of Manager Jones was never fulfilled.

Mr. Carnegie did not rely altogether on starvation to subjugate the unfortunate men. He resorted to the methods which he had found so successful in his coke works in the Connellsville region. Pinkerton guards were hired to protect the property, and Winchester rifles were used. A "dead line" was drawn, over which no union man was allowed to pass. Then he began the importation of foreign "black sheep," who were conveyed in trains into the works – men who could not speak the language of the country, and others who were ostracised by all honorable workmen. Such were the instruments used by the "American protectionist," Carnegie – the friend of Blaine – to break up labor's organization.

Every man locked out was not, however allowed to return to work – over a hundred were blacklisted. Some of these men have left Braddock, perhaps forever, but thirty of them remain and hold Local Assembly 1967 together, the only assembly now in the place.

Not content with refusing them work in Braddock or any of his other mills, Mr. Carnegie, through his agents, has had some of the blacklisted men discharged from other employment which they had obtained. Two examples will be sufficient, and the following affidavit made May 25 has been furnished:

"I David Gibson, a native of Dumfermline, Scotland, once heard a speech made by Andrew Carnegie while on a visit to Dumfermline (his birthplace). During his remarks he advised all young men to migrate to America, where a large field was before them, to better their condition. He said further that all those taking advantage of his advice would meet with his support, and he would certainly find them positions. *** I came to Braddock, got work and was thrown out by the strike, and remained out till the end. ***

"The strike being declared off under the agreement that all the old hands would be taken back, at least as many as possible, and those not getting back would get recommendations to go elsewhere, I, with the others, went to see about a job, but was told my place was filled. Next morning I went to Homestead to look for a job and happened to meet Mr. Jones, who is also superintendent over the Homestead works, I asked him if there was any chance of getting a job. He told me he didn't do the hiring, but told me to go to the man that did hire, and if I did not succeed to come to his office and he would give me a recommendation to go elsewhere. I did not succeed in Homestead, but after a week I got a job with the firm of Riter & Cenley, who were repairing the stoves at the steel works in Braddock.

I worked eight days, when, on Tuesday last, I was sent over to the store for some tools and Jones ran against me. He said, 'I thought I told you that you were never to get any more work around here' I said he never told me anything of the kind. He said he did. I said he did not. Well, he

said, it did not matter a ----, I had to 'get to h--- out of this.' I said I could go, but I told him I was not working for his firm. He asked me who I was working for. I told him. He said it did not matter a ----, for he would have me discharged, and more, he said, 'the next time I see you around here I will have you arrested.' I told him he would never get the chance to arrest me. I walked over to my boss and told him what Jones had said, while I was telling him a policeman came up and told him Bill Jones wanted to see him. My boss went to see Jones and he came back with the policeman and told him that he had been ordered to discharge me. I went away and the policeman followed me out of the works."

Editor's Notes: David Gibson was born in Dunfermline on 1st April 1864, birth registered 4th April. Emigrated to the USA in early 1886, resident of Braddock in Nov 1886 when married to fellow Scot émigré Jeanette Stewart, died 6th April 1916 in Allegheny County occupation at time of death expressman.

The following in support of the NLT article above was printed in the *Commoner and Glassworker*, a high protection paper, August 11:

"Like a relentless monster who cannot be satisfied, Captain Jones, of the Edgar Thomson Steel Works at Braddock, pursues the victims of the recent lockout here. Probably fifty or seventy five of the Knights of Labor who remained true to their obligations are blacklisted not only in the Edgar Thomson works, but at all of Carnegie's works, and even in outside mills. Some of them got work at Homestead only to be picked out and discharged.

"One man was discharged from Homestead and three other mills where he had secured work. He learned, he says that Jones was responsible each time. Meeting Jones on the street, he told him what he knew, and that he was going to apply for work in one more mill, and then, said he, 'if I am discharged from that through you, both you and I will be dead men.'"

The following appeared in the same paper as late as Oct. 13: "L. A. 1967, steel workers at Braddock held a special meeting last Sunday to hear reports on the picnic held on Sept. 22. Among the reports was one that Superintendent Rhinard of the converting mill and Superintendent Gailey of the blast furnaces were over near the picnic grounds, and stayed in that vicinity for a good while. It was stated that John Dougherty, a boy 17 years of age, rowed them across the river, and that Rhinard asked him if he helped post the bills for the picnic. He said he had, and was then told that he could get no more work at the mill. Dougherty has had three turns at the mill since the lockout ended, and is the son of a crippled soldier's widow, who has been washing for a living since her boy was blacklisted by the Carnegie firm. She will continue to wash, as the boy is out of that mill for good."

Mr. Carnegie has boasted that he made a million and a half dollars in 1887. A large part of that was "made" from steel rails – on which there is a duty of \$17 – and which he manufactured at the Edgar Thomson mills in Braddock. When he presented his ultimatum he claimed that a reduction was necessary, in order to compete with the Chicago steel mills, which he evidently considered paid the lowest wages in the United States.