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David Glauber

University of South Florida

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For over one hundred years, Carnegie libraries have served communities in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and the United States (U.S.) (Bobinski, 1989, p. 367). Industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie committed himself to donating ninety percent of his \$330 million fortune for the establishment of libraries, parks, and concert halls, among other public venues (Murray, 2009, p. 183; Rubin, 2010, p. 60). As one of the richest individuals in the United States, he believed that his “excess wealth” should be used to improve conditions for the masses (Rubin, 2010, 56-57). However, why didn’t he improve conditions for his workers at Carnegie Steel who helped him to amass his fortune? Poor relations with the workers he employed cast a shadow over his philanthropic activities. Carnegie’s dedication to libraries, nevertheless, helped to expand and shape the public library system that benefits thousands of people in the U.S. (Murray, 2009, p. 187).

Carnegie followed a belief common to nineteenth century Americans of a “rugged individualism,” which denoted that individuals had to find their own path to success and could not rely on others. Achieving success depended on hard work and patience. Carnegie maintained that this path was available to everyone, but not everyone agreed with him (Mickelson, 1975, p. 118). According to historian H.W. Brands (2010), “No senator or governor so directly controlled the lives of so many people as Carnegie, whose hundreds of thousands of employees looked to him for the wages on which their millions of dependents relied on” (p. 7). One railway workers’ union official believed that holding such power over so many people, and profiting excessively at their expense, was immoral (Murray, 2009, p. 185). Throughout American history, Brands (2010) explains that the competing ideals of democracy and capitalism have shaped American society (p. 7). Carnegie saw money as the reward for his success and did

not believe that there were any problems with American institutions; he contended that the institutions that existed just needed proper leadership (Mickelson, 1975, p. 118).

Carnegie set a powerful philanthropic example that shaped and expanded America's public libraries. As a self-made man who relied on libraries to shape his adolescent mind, he believed that access to libraries could improve the lives of working class individuals. With this access, any individual could find success (Murray, 2009, p. 183). Once Carnegie found success, he established trusts for the establishment of Carnegie libraries across the United States and the United Kingdom. These libraries would provide public access to information and would be operated at the local level. Through taxation, local governments sustained the materials, resources, and operation of the library. Operating at the local level also ensured that the library possessed materials deemed important by the community (Bobinski, 1989, p. 187).

Carnegie libraries expanded the public library system in America and provided a model with open stacks of information for patrons to sort through, rather than the closed stacks that were previously commonplace (Murray, 2009, p. 187). However, the wealth used to open these libraries stemmed from his industrial activities, which included imposed wage cuts and union busting activities at Carnegie Steel (Aronoff, 2013, para. 2). His ethical practices, in addition to funding requirements at the local level, resulted in many communities opposing the establishment of Carnegie libraries (Stuart, 2013, p. 93). Despite Carnegie's business character, American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers expressed most pragmatically that communities should accept the libraries anyway. He asserted, "Yes, accept his library, organize the workers, secure better conditions, and particularly reduction in hours of labor, and then workers will have some chance and leisure in which to read books." (Murray, 2009, p. 186).

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