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**EXPLANATION**

This is the excess of the Gilded Age and an event of the subsequent Progressive Era on the shoulders of leaders in the steel industry.

The nation fueled his ambitions and welcomed his successes, but the newspaper served as a metaphor for an elevated power community and ultimately housed disingenuous comments as events took place. From the beginning of an obvious inequitable distribution of wealth

One logically speculative piece on Andrew Carnegie published in 1898 in The *New York Times* emphasizes the significance of the philanthropist's persona. As fortunes unfolded around the development of public libraries, there was a double-edged comment. From the perspective of Carnegie's generosity in establishing public library buildings: "This readiness to found free libraries, his friends say, actually amounts to a million." Created with developing framing logic, sociologist Edwin Engelmann recognized that "American organizations and democratic societies have the potential..."

The early years of Carnegie's philanthropy, noted by historians as a parenthesis in his life, stretched from the inception of a reading room established for steel mill workers who worked 14-hour shifts, seven days a week, to the devastating Homestead Strike that stretched from June 3, 1892, to the dedication of the controversial Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

**KEY EVENTS**

- Funding of Reading Room at Edgar Thomson Works in Pittsburgh-are area town of Braddock, PA 1891
- Labor dispute and strike at Pittsburgh-are area town of Homestead, PA 1892
- Dedication and opening of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh 1895

**ABSTRACT**

Newspapers were a primary and significant form of mass communication and of historical record during the late nineteenth century.

Identifying newspapers as archives and archiving the ProQuest Historical Newspaper database facilitate exploratory research into society's changing perceptions toward dramatic cultural shifts at the time in United States history.

This investigation demonstrates contextualization of the past through analysis of articles, a preserved collection, regarding Carnegie's funding of public library buildings published in The *New York Times* between 1880 and 1899, a span of years punctuated by the funding of a reading room at the Edgar Thomson Steelworks in Braddock, the labor strike at Homestead steel mill, and the dedication of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Framing theory effectively serves such purpose.

Examination and interpretation of the digitized representation of historical records found in the newspaper as archive allows expanded interpretation of collective memory, the portrait of an American icon, a nation balancing prosperity and desperation near the close of a century, and Andrew Carnegie as significant and controversial force in the development of public libraries in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era.