

The Most Perfect Town in the World

William H. Tyre

Chicago Literary Club, 5 February 2018

In 1896, the Second Annual International Hygienic and Pharmaceutical Exposition was held in Prague, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The event is little remembered today, especially when compared to other events of the era like the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago three years earlier. But in its day, the exposition was an extremely important event, with countries from around the world sending delegates to present and listen to papers and prepare exhibits that addressed the issues of sanitation and living conditions in rapidly growing urban centers.

As part of the exposition, a competition was held to identify the most perfect town in the world, examining in detail new and progressive ideas engaged by town planners for improving living conditions among the working classes. Competitors included several model factory town builders from Europe: Krupp, the munitions manufacturer in Essen Germany; Stumm, the steel manufacturer, also in Germany; and Baron von Ringhoffer, a wagon manufacturer, in the host city of Prague. Representing the United States was George M. Pullman, president of the Pullman Palace Car Company which manufactured luxury sleeper railroad cars. Pullman had little interest in the competition, and in fact had sent his exhibit late, in response to his realization that the United States was not represented.

When judging had concluded, the prize for "The Most Perfect Town in the World" was awarded to Pullman, a triumph for the sole American entry in the Eurocentric based exposition. In May 1897, several months after the exposition had ended, two medals and an elaborately designed diploma were received by Pullman. The medals were inscribed:

"The jury of the second international Pharmaceutical exhibition at Prague, 1896, has awarded to George M. Pullman, President Pullman's Palace Car company, Chicago,

Ill., the diploma of honor for correct hygienic arranged homes and railway transportation conveyances.”

Although Pullman’s “palace cars” were included in the award, the focus of this paper will be the Town of Pullman itself. The town had long been celebrated since its beginnings in 1881, but the timing of the award was nothing short of extraordinary. Just two years earlier, a major strike with national implications had severely and permanently damaged the reputation of George Pullman, his company, and the town he had built for his workers. The award, in some small way, served as vindication for all the bad press he had received, and no doubt brought some satisfaction to George Pullman, who died on October 19, 1897, just five months after the medals were received. In an article entitled “Is the Model Town,” published in the *Chicago Tribune* the day after his death, it was noted:

“The Town of Pullman, which, from a sociological as well as purely industrial point of view, has attracted world-wide attention, had its beginning in 1879. It had its inception in the belief on the part of Mr. Pullman that a semi-paternal care for the physical as well as moral well-being of his employees would result in materially conserving the interest of the company as well as elevating and improving the conditions of the working people themselves.

“From the beginning it was regarded with the greatest interest by the thoughtful of all classes, and it has long constituted one of the greatest attractions which Chicago has to offer the visitor. Especially has this been the case with those interested in sociological matters, and it has been the subject of hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles.

“It has been called ‘social experimentation on a large scale,’ and it realizes in many respects the supreme idea of socialism, yet it has met with anything but the approval of the socialistic dreamer.”

The story of George Pullman’s burial a few days later sheds light on the feelings of the time, noting that there was legitimate concern over the possible theft or desecration of the body, in response to the lingering effects from the 1894 strike. This account is taken from Emmett Dedmon’s *Fabulous Chicago*:

“The funeral services for Pullman were held privately in his mansion on Prairie Avenue late in the afternoon. The funeral cortege pulled away from the house just at dusk. It was night when the procession arrived at Graceland Cemetery where elaborate preparations had been made to assure that Pullman was ‘more secure from the encroachment of the living world’ than any of ‘the Egyptian monarchs supposedly resting under the ponderous weight of pyramids.’

“A pit as large as an average room had been dug on the family lot and lined across its base and walls with reinforced concrete eighteen inches thick. Into this the lead lined mahogany casket was lowered, covered with a wrapping of tar paper and covered with a quick-drying coat of asphalt which would exclude all air from the casket. The balance of the pit was filled to the level of the casket with solid concrete, on top of which a series of heavy steel rails were laid at right angles to each other and bolted together. The steel rails were then imbedded in another layer of concrete. The work of filling in the grave required two days. Then the ‘sod was replaced, the myrtle planted’ and the grave ‘differed in no outward respect from the thousands of others under the shadow of the trees of Graceland.’”

GEORGE MORTIMER PULLMAN

Who was George Mortimer Pullman and how did he come to be both the recipient of praise and a target of hatred for his work in establishing his company and town? Pullman was born in Auburn, New York on March 3, 1831. His father was a carpenter and a strict disciplinarian, who instilled in his young son the values of honesty, a strong work ethic, and devotion to God and family. In the early 1850s, the father received contracts to move buildings during the widening of the nearby Erie Canal. When he died soon after, George Pullman took over the contracts and completed the work.

Once that project had ended, Pullman saw great possibility looking west to Chicago, which was then beginning to raise its buildings four to seven feet in response to elevating its streets to permit adequate drainage in the swampy land along Lake Michigan. Pullman's experience on the canal made him perfectly suited for the job, and he quickly gained an excellent reputation for his work. The largest and most prominent of his projects was to raise the massive five-story masonry Tremont House hotel six feet. Using 500 men to turn 5,000 jackscrews in simultaneous precision, the building was successfully raised without disrupting business or the hotel guests.

Pullman made several trips between Chicago and New York during this period and experienced the "sleeper cars" of the time. After one particularly nightmarish trip lasting three and a half days, he made the decision to investigate better options for comfortable rail travel. In 1858, he formed a partnership with Benjamin Field of Albion New York, who owned the rights to run sleeping cars on both the Chicago & Alton and Galena & Chicago Union railroads. Soon after, he invested \$2,000 to outfit two passenger cars as sleepers.

The idea of a sleeping car was not new – experiments with the cars dated back to 1836, when the railroad industry was in its infancy. By the time Pullman and Field formed their company, the Wagner Sleeping Car and Woodruff Sleeping Car companies were both well established. But

Pullman saw enormous possibilities with rail travel increasing at an exponential rate. He secured the use of a repair shed owned by the Chicago & Alton Railroad on the present site of Union Station to undertake an ambitious plan to create comfort and luxury for rail travels hitherto unknown. In 1864, he completed work on his "Pioneer," an elegantly finished sleeping car that could serve as a coach during the day and a sleeping at night. Luxuries included brocade covered seats, plush red carpet, hand-finished woodwork, gilt-framed mirrors, and silver-trimmed oil lamps. More importantly, the comfort was significantly enhanced by cast-iron wheel trucks topped by coil springs and rubber blocks. Pullman's ambitious Pioneer car cost \$20,000, an enormous sum for the day, but he firmly believed travelers would pay a premium for beauty and luxury. There was one significant hurdle to overcome, however. The car was one foot wider and two and a half feet higher than a standard railroad car, which prevented its use on existing railroad tracks.

The death of Abraham Lincoln in April 1865 ironically provided Pullman with a golden opportunity to put his car into use. Colonel James H. Bowen, chairman of the Republican Central Committee in Illinois, selected the Pioneer car as part of the funeral cortege as it passed through the state from Chicago to Springfield. During the two weeks between Lincoln's death and the arrival of his body in Chicago, railroad platforms and trestles were quickly altered to accommodate the new larger car. Thousands viewed the funeral train and Pullman's car. It received national acclaim, securing Pullman's prominence as a car builder. He quickly put the cars into production, and railroads began to alter their tracks to accommodate them. The Pioneer was put on display when not in use, and long lines of people waited to see the car. Newspapers were unanimous in their praise of the car as superior to anything previously produced.

Pullman was an excellent promoter and offered excursion trips, liberally giving out free passes to prominent citizens and civic groups. One such excursion took place in May 1866, when nearly a dozen cars carried 500 members of the cream of Chicago society on a picnic to Haare's

Park, located twelve miles west of the city. An elegant meal was served by white-jacketed waiters provided by Chicago's finest caterer, Kinsley, the food being accompanied by generous quantities of champagne, cognac, and cigars. At the conclusion of the afternoon, Judge Thomas Drummond proposed a resolution, which was unanimously adopted by those in attendance:

“That the completion of the magnificent sleeping coaches marks a notable epoch in the history of railway travel and that the thanks of the entire traveling public are due to Mr. George M. Pullman, the originator of the sleeping car enterprise, whose energy, liberality and abundant means have enabled our railways to supply their patrons with every possible convenience, whereby a journey by rail becomes both a comfort and luxury.”

By the end of 1866, Pullman had 48 cars in operation, dominating the industry in the Midwest. Later that year he organized the Pullman, Kimball and Ramsey Sleeping Car Company in Atlanta, Georgia to serve Southern railroads eager to rebuild and expand after the Civil War. Within two years, ten major lines had contracted with the company. It is important to note that Pullman also owned and operated the cars, receiving the extra \$2.00 charge for the sleeper while the railroad received the passenger's regular fare. This complete control over production, ownership, and operation of the cars would mirror his scheme for the Town of Pullman and would figure prominently in the issues which resulted in the 1894 strike.

PULLMAN'S PALACE CAR COMPANY

The State of Illinois issued a charter to Pullman's Palace Car Company on February 22, 1867. The \$1 million initial stock offering had been quietly sold to Chicago businessmen and railroad industry leaders. At the organizational meeting held on August 1, George Pullman was elected president and general manager. Later that year, he formed another company, the Pullman

Pacific Car Company, in partnership with Andrew Carnegie, who had initially intended to compete with Pullman. Carnegie said of Pullman:

“(Pullman) was one of those rare characters who can see the drift of things and was always to be found . . . swimming in the main current where movement was the fastest.”

Soon after, their company received a major contract with the Union Pacific and the Pennsylvania railroads, establishing a nationwide network for Pullman’s cars.

In those first few years, prior to 1870, Pullman did not build his own cars. Instead he contracted with other companies, which would deliver the cars to the Michigan Central Depot directly across from his office at Michigan and Randolph. The cars would be fully furnished and then sent out. The company quickly expanded to include dining cars as well, resulting in what were referred to as “hotels on wheels.” Pullman weathered the financial depression of the 1870s, with expanded operations in St. Louis, Detroit, Elmira New York, and Wilmington Delaware. But even with these multiple facilities, the company could not handle the large volume of new orders.

Pullman began to look for a large tract of land to expand operations. At first, he considered St. Louis, but real estate brokers heard about his plans and speculated on properties, dramatically inflating prices. He realized he needed to be more secretive in his approach, and he began sending agents around the country in the guise of selecting a site while he put together a plan. Colonel Bowen, who had helped launched Pullman’s company in 1865, had encouraged Pullman to purchase land twelve miles south of Chicago near Lake Calumet as early as 1869. The proximity of the area to Chicago, the Illinois Central tracks, and Lake Calumet were all attractive. Bowen was instructed to purchase additional acreage for an “undisclosed buyer.” Eventually, he was able to acquire 4,000 acres of land from multiple owners for a total of \$800,000.

In April 1880, Pullman announced that his new national headquarters would be built in the Calumet area. Furthermore, the plan was to include the construction of a town for his workers in addition to the factory complex.

THE INSPIRATION FOR THE TOWN

George Pullman had been interested in the labor problem as early as 1872. While traveling to Europe that year, he read and then reread a popular novel of the day, Charles Reade's *Put Yourself in His Place* set in the English industrial town of Hillsborough. The book opens with a description of the town:

“Industries so vast . . . on a limited space had been fatal to beauty . . . The city is pock-marked with public houses and bristles with high chimneys. They are not confined to a locality but stuck all over the place like cloves in an orange. They . . . belch forth messy volumes of black smoke that hang like acres of crepe over the place and veil the sun and the blue sky.”

During that trip, it is probable that he visited the town of Saltaire in West Yorkshire, England, and several scholars have indicated that this plan influenced his own design for the Town of Pullman. Saltaire was constructed in the early 1850s by Sir Titus Salt, a woolen manufacturer, on the Aire River adjacent to his new factory. Salt was an early advocate of Fourierism which promoted the benefits of pleasant surroundings, good working conditions and cooperative communities in creating and maintaining excellent employees. The town is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Pullman also had an interest in the “model tenement movement” of the early 1870s. He firmly believed that it was in his interest as an employer to see that his men were “clean, contented, sober, educated, and happy.” But he also realized the challenges of achieving that ideal when workers were forced to live in crowded and unhealthy tenements and subject to the temptations of drink and vice that were readily available in cities.

Pullman was straightforward in noting his motivations for building the town, while testifying in court following the strike of 1894:

“The object in building Pullman was the establishment of a great manufacturing business on the most substantial basis possible, recognizing . . . that the working people are the most important element which enters into the successful operation of any manufacturing enterprise. We decided to build, in close proximity to the shops, homes for workingmen of such character and surround as would prove so attractive as to cause the best class of mechanics to seek that place for employment in preference to others. We also desired to establish the place on such a basis as would exclude all baneful influences, believing that such a policy would result in the greatest measure of success . . . from a commercial point of view.”

Thus, the idea of the town always addressed both a desire to provide quality housing for his workers while also realizing the benefit such conditions would provide his company. He went on to state:

“That such advantages and surroundings made better workmen by removing from them the feeling of discontent and desire for change which so generally characterize the American workman; thus protecting the employer from loss of time and money consequent upon intemperance, labor strikes, and dissatisfaction which generally result from poverty and uncongenial home surroundings.”

Ultimately, creating a town for his workers made good economic sense, and in his orderly mind, it was simply the extension of one continuous idea, as noted in a brochure produced by the company for the World’s Columbian Exposition:

“The story of Pullman naturally divides itself into three parts – the building of the car, the building of the operating system, and the building of the town. Each of these

stages is the natural logical sequence of the other. Through them all runs the same underlying thought, the same thread of idea.”

THE TOWN OF PULLMAN

To avoid legal complications regarding how much land could be owned by the Pullman Palace Car Company, the Pullman Land Association was formed which controlled all land not directly used for manufacturing. It remained under direct control of the company and the Association was expected to produce a 6% return on the investment. This arrangement would be of relevance following the 1894 strike.

Three key players were involved in the design of the town:

- Landscape architect Nathan Barrett, who had done work on Pullman’s summer estate Fairlawn in Long Branch, New Jersey;
- A young New York architect Solon Spencer Beman, who had undertaken some alterations to Pullman’s Prairie Avenue mansion after being introduced to him by Barrett. Beman would go on to design Pullman’s office building in 1884 on the site where we are gathered this evening;
- Benzette Williams, former superintendent of sewage for the City of Chicago.

As land was being acquired during the winter of 1879-1880, this team worked on a detailed plan for the town. Beman designed the buildings, Barrett sited them and created the landscape plan, and Williams laid out the water, sewer, and gas systems. By late April 1880, surveyors began laying out the placement of streets and building foundations based on Barrett’s plans.

The sewer system, one of the elements of the town that was instrumental in receiving the 1896 prize, was novel and innovative for the time. Designed by Williams, the plan called for reusing the town sewage to fertilize a farm three miles from the town. Sewage was piped from the town to a huge collection reservoir beneath the large water tower at the factory complex, and from there

pumped to the farm for distribution over the fields. After being filtered through six feet of earth, pure water was then returned to Lake Calumet. This is believed to be the first large scale application of proper disposal, continued use, and filtration methods.

In May, ground was broken for the first of the factory buildings. By November, construction began on the Hotel Florence (named for Pullman's favorite child) and on the first 100 dwelling units located between 111th and 112th streets, immediately to the east of the hotel. Many of the elements used in the construction of the buildings were produced on site in the company shops by the employees including doors, window frames and sashes, and bricks, which used the extensive clay deposits available at the adjacent Lake Calumet.

Work proceeded rapidly and by April 1881 the Illinois Central's Pullman station was opened. The Corliss steam engine, the largest engine in the world and the engineering marvel of the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, was set into operation in the factory. Another 400 dwellings units were begun, the Hotel was completed, and work began on the Greenstone Church, livery stables, Market Hall and a huge Arcade building. By the fall of 1882 the original residential district south of the factory had already been outgrown, and an additional 600 units were constructed to the north.

Just 4-1/2 years after ground was broken, the town could boast 1,400 dwelling units, a total investment by the company of nearly \$8 million, and a population of more than 8,500 people. An article, published in the *Chicago Tribune* the day after Pullman's death in 1897, summarized what residents could expect to find:

"The town was laid out with broad boulevards, the beds of which were scientifically constructed. Lawns and flower beds of beautiful and artistic design were laid out, the avenues were lined with elms and other trees, and paved and well lighted streets came into existence, and were kept in perfect condition and cleanliness at the expense of the company.

Brick homes were built for 1,700 families. They were provided with all modern improvements, and every house and flat, even the cheapest in rent, were equipped with modern appliances of water, gas, and internal sanitation.”

This provided an extraordinary option for workers who otherwise might well find themselves in crowded tenement buildings, with little or no open space in which their children could play, and lacking trees, flowers and grass. Rents in the town ranged from \$4.50 per month for the smallest cottage to \$50.00 for the largest homes rented to company executives. Boarding houses for single males provided room and board for \$8.00 to \$9.00 per month.

INDUSTRIAL AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS

In terms of reviewing the architecture of the town, I would like to explore three major groupings of buildings: industrial, public, and residential. All are built of the same rich red locally-made brick, and are designed in the Queen Anne style, with an almost infinite variety of detailing, providing the town’s picturesque appearance.

Prior to the construction of the Town of Pullman, little thought was given to industrial buildings, beyond their practical requirements. Beman was among the first to introduce architectural styling to make the buildings beautiful and in keeping with the rest of the town. Barrett carefully placed the buildings in a park-like setting, including the huge Lake Vista in front of the main administration building, which visitors immediately saw upon their arrival by train. The lake, beyond providing an aesthetic purpose, also functioned as a cooling reservoir and run-off collection basin for the huge Corliss steam engine, combining aesthetics and practical necessity. Inside, attention was paid to ensuring adequate lighting, excellent ventilation, and the painting of walls in light colors to create a more uplifting and cheerful atmosphere. A far cry from “sweat shop” conditions prevalent elsewhere at the time.

The most commanding structure was the Administration Building with its 120-foot clock tower. To either side were huge elongated wings housing the erecting shops, providing a symmetry to the structure and an efficient assembly-line system that could produce two complete cars per day. Immediately east of the factory complex was the enormous Water Tower, which, at 195 feet in height, was the tallest building west of New York at the time. Four massive phoenix columns, eight stories in height, supported a two-story 500,000-gallon octagonal water storage tank. The size and height resulted in water pressure of about 75 pounds per square inch, more than adequate to provide the needs of the entire community.

Chief among the public buildings was the huge Arcade building, with a floor plan extending 160 by 250 square feet, making it the largest commercial structure of its type in Chicago at the time. It was, in effect, a completely enclosed shopping center that served a wide variety of needs. It contained shops, a bank, post office, a 6,000-volume public library with books personally donated by Pullman, and a 1,000-seat theatre that, in terms of design, rivaled the finest theatres in downtown Chicago. The broad covered walkways between shops were lit by skylights above, and the carriageways lined up with the adjacent streets, creating carefully framed vistas in all directions.

Market Hall was placed in the middle of an intersection to carefully complement the grid system and provide for a more picturesque setting. The first floor contained a lunch counter and sixteen stalls for the sale of fresh meats and vegetables, many of which were grown at the company operated farm. The second floor contained a 600-seat meeting hall. The original building was destroyed by fire in 1892 and was replaced the next year by a similar structure, more Classical Revival in style. At that time, four “circle buildings” were also built around the perimeter of the square to provide additional residential units and to better define the square.

The Pullman stables were located south of the Arcade building, and it was here that all residents and visitors were required to board their horses. A horse and buggy could be rented for

Sunday afternoon excursions for \$3.00. The volunteer fire company was also housed in the building.

The Florence Hotel was the crown jewel of the town and was prominently situated immediately south of the railroad depot, greeting visitors upon their arrival. Many would spend the night and be entertained by Pullman, who maintained a suite of rooms on the second floor for his frequent overnight stays. The hotel could accommodate upwards of 100 guests in its rooms, and 125 diners in its elegantly appointed dining room. Additional features included a pool room, barber shop, ladies' parlor, and a bar – the only location in the town where alcohol could be served. The building was a quintessential example of the Queen Anne style with elaborate gables, chimneys, dormers, and brick detailing, and a wide veranda wrapping the west and south facades.

The hotel stood at the north end of Arcade Park, a beautifully landscaped area with flower beds, walking paths, and a band shell. At the southeast corner of the park, the distinctive Greenstone Church was one of the few structures not constructed of brick. As its name suggested, the building was clad in a rich greenstone from Pennsylvania, that added to its imposing design in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It was rented to a Presbyterian congregation, fulfilling Pullman's strong religious convictions, but he later admitted that the visual aspect of a church building adjacent to the park was an equally important consideration for its construction.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Most of the residential buildings were brick rowhouses containing from two to seven rooms. Foundations and trim were stone, and the roofs were slate. Every home had direct access to a private yard, and a paved alley which facilitated deliveries by vendors and daily trash collection, a service provided by the company. As noted in a 1970 article in *Historic Preservation*, a publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

“A variety of dwelling unit types was to be found on and within each block throughout the town. These architectural differences were designed to meet the varying income, status and family characteristics of the workers, and furnished a basis for meaningful variation in the street facades. Adding to the richness and identity of each street were structural and artistic variations in detailing, landscaping, roof line, lintels, chimney configuration and brick coloring. Continuity was maintained by similarity of proportions, repetition of key details, brick-textured surfaces, setbacks and the rhythmic lines of eaves and lintels.”

Cross ventilation and abundant natural light were assured by the designs which incorporated floor plans that were never more than two rooms deep. Skylights were frequently employed and a minimum of 100 feet was required between parallel rows of houses facing across the tree-lined streets. This was a feature of special importance to Pullman, who detested houses built up to the sidewalk.

There are more than a dozen types of housing based on number of rooms and room configuration. The simplest housing consisted of single rooms in boarding houses. Two- and four-flat houses were frequently rented to newly married couples, earning one block the name “honeymoon row.” Individual homes usually contained four or more rooms, and most were configured in pairs, sharing large open porches. The largest residences, containing nine or more rooms, were built on 111th Street directly across from the factory, and surrounding Arcade Park on the east and south. These were occupied by company executives, foremen, and the most highly skilled craftsmen. These houses also benefitted from the most sophisticated heating, with steam heat from the factory being piped underground directly to the structures.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Opportunities for recreation were numerous in the town. In addition to the library and theatre in the Arcade, residents had access to what was known as “Athletic Island” built into Lake

Calumet at the east end of town. A large grandstand held crowds who would gather to watch a variety of athletic activities ranging from baseball to rowing. Countless social clubs were often characterized by the ethnic makeup of their members, as immigrants from several European countries made Pullman their home, including residents from Germany, England, Ireland, Holland, Poland, Italy, Sweden, and Denmark. The Pullman Band achieved prominence and performed around the country.

THE STRIKE AND LATER HISTORY

The Town of Pullman was annexed to Chicago in 1889, along with the village of Hyde Park, although most Pullman residents voted against the measure. Despite this legal change however, the community maintained the feel of a separate town for years.

In 1893 a severe financial depression hit the country, due in part to the over-expansion of the railroad industry. Pullman cut production at other factories in an attempt to keep his factory in the Town of Pullman at full capacity. Eventually, Pullman was forced to lay off employees and cut wages for others, but did not reduce rents, using the argument that the company and the Town were two distinctly separate entities.

By the spring of 1894, many of the 3,300 workers still employed joined Eugene Debs' American Railway Union which had organized all railroad workers into one huge union the previous year. A grievance committee was formed but Pullman would not listen to their demands. When several members of the committee were fired without just cause, a strike was planned. On May 11, 1894, 90% of Pullman workers walked off the job. By June, the workers realized they needed more support, so many attended the American Railway Union convention being held in Chicago. The ARU demanded neutral arbitration and threatened to stop train traffic if the demand was not met by June 26th. Pullman maintained there was nothing to arbitrate or discuss, and the railroad industry largely came to a halt soon after.

Local newspapers, with the notable exception of the *Chicago Times*, supported the company and reported on the train delays, inability to deliver mail, and widespread destruction of property – some of which was later shown to have been deliberately caused by the railroad companies in an effort to discredit the striking workers.

On July 2, against the wishes of Gov. John Peter Altgeld, President Cleveland ordered the use of 14,000 Federal troops to combat the strikers, on the grounds that they were disrupting the delivery of mail, a federal offense. Shortly thereafter, Eugene Debs and the officers of the ARU were arrested. Governor Altgeld and Chicago Mayor John Patrick Hopkins, himself a former Pullman employee and Chicago's first Irish Catholic mayor, sided with the workers, risking their own political careers. Violence erupted around the country and eventually more than thirty men were killed. Damage was estimated to exceed \$80 million. The strike was brought to an end and Debs was convicted and sentenced to prison (despite being defended by a young but passionate attorney named Clarence Darrow).

A legacy of the strike was the creation of Labor Day, which was designated a federal holiday by President Cleveland just six days after the strike ended.

An interesting side note is that all of the unpaid rents which accrued before, during, and shortly after the strike were never collected by the company. The outward appearance of the town remained unchanged, but Pullman's reputation never recovered. As one worker noted, "We work in a Pullman factory, we live in a Pullman house, we shop in a Pullman store, and when we die, we will go to a Pullman hell."

Following Pullman's death in 1897, Robert Todd Lincoln was appointed head of the company. Lincoln instituted major policy changes that signaled a shift in how the company viewed the Town. Combined with this was an 1898 Illinois Supreme Court decision that forced the company to relinquish ownership of all non-industrial property. A depressed real estate market

bought the company some time, but by 1907 more than half of the town's available property had been sold off into private hands. That year was a turning point for the town as company maintenance of the buildings and grounds was discontinued, with the resulting loss of the well-groomed appearance and ordered, uniform look.

At the same time, the company changed to all-steel car construction and built large additions to the factory building. The new structures were not in keeping with the original architectural scheme, and further altered the character of the town. In time, the Town of Pullman simply became another South Side neighborhood. In 1960, the Roseland Chamber of Commerce recommended clearing the entire residential community south of the factory for an industrial park. Neighbors fought the proposal, and the Pullman Civic Organization was formed to successfully block the plan.

By the end of the decade, the south portion of the town was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and within a few years it was recognized as a National Historic Landmark, the highest national recognition awarded. In 1972, it was designated one of the first landmark districts by the City of Chicago. More than 20 years later, the north section of the town was added to the city landmark district.

After decades of work by residents and preservationists, the entire Town of Pullman was designated a National Monument, with President Barack Obama visiting the community on February 19, 2015 to sign the official order. Since that time, the National Park Service (which oversees the monument), the State of Illinois (which owns key properties including the Hotel Florence and most of the factory complex), and local organizations, have worked diligently on a plan to interpret the monument, and restore key buildings and landscape features of the town.

CONCLUSION

The Town of Pullman revolutionized the concept of worker's housing in the late 19th century. Admired and visited by countless individuals during its heyday, it directly influenced both

industrial towns that followed and the basic concepts of good urban design. In spite of the 1894 strike that redefined the company and ultimately resulted in the selling off of all non-industrial properties into private hands, the master town plan was honored as “The Most Perfect Town in the World” two years later. Today, as a National Monument, its story remains relevant, and a new generation of visitors marvel at the urban experiment that succeeded by overcoming the multitude of ills that plagued immigrants and workers coming to large cities in huge numbers in the late 1800s. In closing, I would like to quote from the 1992 book *The Making of Urban America* by Cornell University professor John W. Reps:

“Pullman was a remarkable achievement. Not since Williamsburg had an entire town been designed with equal attention to the ground plan and to the buildings that would form the third dimension. Beman and Barrett succeeded in creating in their two town squares real civic design. Despite the relatively small size of the town, the whole effect remained distinctly urban in character. The designers must be given full credit, but George Pullman deserves equal praise for his vision of what a model industrial town might be.”