

**Pullman – An Ideal Company Town?**  
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*Directions:* The following question requires you to construct a coherent essay that integrates your interpretation of Documents A – H and your knowledge of the period referred to in the question. You may also assess the reliability of the documents as historical sources where relevant to your answer.

**It has been said that George Pullman “hoped to improve the relationship between capital and labor by creating a safe, clean, culturally enriching environment for his workers, who would pay him back with loyalty, honesty, and commitment to hard work.”<sup>1</sup> To what extent do you believe that Pullman succeeded in creating his vision of an ideal town?**

<sup>1</sup>George Pullman: Social Reformer, <http://www.shicagohs.org/history/pullman/pul2.html>

**Document A**

One gentleman, whose position ought to have exempted him from it, was "warned" in coming to Pullman to be careful in what he said openly about the town. It required recourse to some ingenuity to ascertain the real opinion of the people about their own city. While the writer does not feel at liberty to narrate his own experience, it can do no harm to mention a strange coincidence. While in the city the buttons on his wife's boots kept tearing off in the most remarkable manner, and it was necessary to try different shoemakers, and no one could avoid free discussion with a man who came on so harmless an errand as to have the buttons sewed on his wife's boots. This was only one of the devices employed. The men believe they are watched by the "company's spotter," and to let one of them know that information was desired about Pullman for publication was to close his lips to the honest expression of opinion. The women were inclined to be more outspoken.

Source: Ely, Richard T. "Pullman: A Social Study." *Harper's Magazine* 70 (February 1885): 452-466.

**Document B**

The people of Pullman are not happy and grumble at their situation even more than the inhabitants of towns not model are accustomed to do. They say that all this perfection of order costs them too much money and imposes upon them an intolerable constraint...They want to run the municipal government themselves, according to the ordinary American fashion. They secretly rebel because the Pullman Company continues its watch and authority over them after working hours. They declare they are bound hand and foot by a philanthropic monopoly.

Source: Article in the New York Sun, October 11, 1885, quoted in Almont Lindsay, The Pullman Strike.

## Document C

"What amount of land is owned by the Pullman Association," asked the reporter. "Very nearly 4,000 acres." "Is any of it for sale?" "No sir, we will not sell an acre under any circumstances, and we will only lease to parties whom we are well satisfied will conform with our ideas in developing the place. We will not allow any saloons or drinking resorts in the town. We shall do all we can to cultivate the better natures of our workmen. .. My idea has always been that it was to the employers' interest to see that his men are clean, contented, sober 31 educated and happy. They make better workmen, and they develop the employers' industries more. I shall try to benefit humanity where it is in my power to do so. Here we shall have every attribute of a town exemplified, and I hope to be able to provide each and every attraction that can be desired - churches, schools, gymnasiums., reading rooms, etc."

Source: Interview with George Pullman, The Chicago Tribune, August 16, 1881.

## Document D

One of the most striking peculiarities of this place is the all-pervading air of thrift and providence. The most pleasing impression of general well-being is at once produced. Contrary to what is seen ordinarily in laborers' quarters, not a dilapidated door-step nor a broken window, stuffed perhaps with old clothing, is to be found in the city. The streets of Pullman, always kept in perfect condition, are wide and finely macadamized, and young shade trees on each side now ornament the town, and will in a few years afford refreshing protection from the rays of the summer sun.

Source: Ely, Richard T. "Pullman: A Social Study." *Harper's Magazine* 70 (February 1885): 452-466.

## Document E

There are over fifteen hundred buildings at Pullman, and the entire cost of the town, including all the manufacturing establishments, is estimated at eight millions of dollars. The rents of the dwellings vary from \$4 50 per month for the cheapest Rats of two rooms to \$100 a month for the largest private house in the place. The rent usually paid varies from \$14 to \$25 a month, exclusive of the water charge, which is generally not far from eighty cents. A five-roomed cottage, such as is seen in the illustration, rents for \$17 a month, and its cost is estimated at \$1700, including a charge of \$300 for the lot. But it must be understood that the estimated value of \$1700 includes profits on brick and carpenter work and everything furnished by the company, for each industry at Pullman stands on its own feet, and keeps its own separate account. The company's brickyards charge the company a profit on the brick the latter buys, and the other establishments do the same; consequently the estimated cost of the buildings includes profits which flowed after all into the company's coffers.

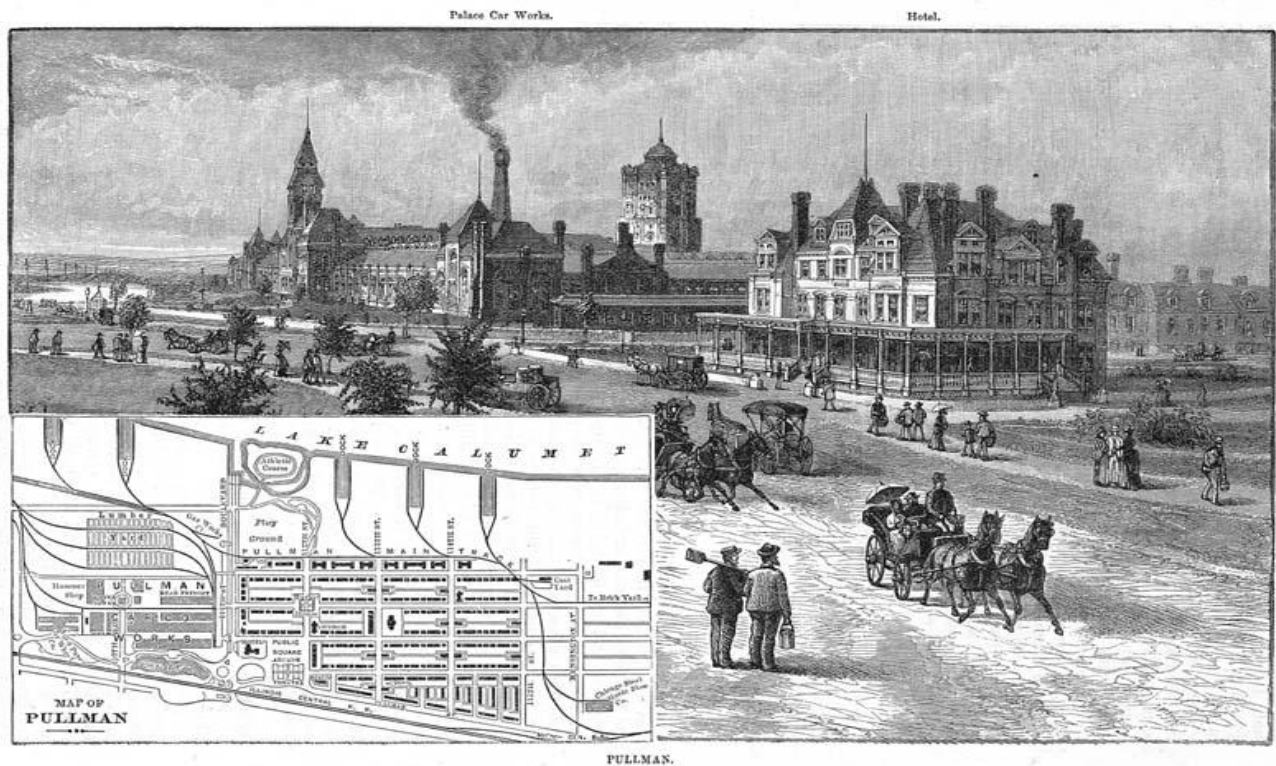
Source: Ely, Richard T. "Pullman: A Social Study." *Harper's Magazine* 70 (February 1885): 452-466.

## Document F

In looking over all the facts of the case the conclusion is unavoidable that the idea of Pullman is un-American. It is a nearer approach than anything the writer has seen to what appears to be the ideal of the great German Chancellor. It is not the American ideal. It is benevolent, well wishing feudalism, which desires the happiness of the people, but in such way as shall please the authorities. One can not avoid thinking of the late Czar of Russia, Alexander II., to whom the welfare of his subjects was truly a matter of concern. He wanted them to be happy, but desired their happiness to proceed from him, in whom everything should centre. Serfs were freed, the knout abolished, and no insuperable objection raised to reforms, until his people showed a decided determination to take matters in their own hands, to govern themselves, and to seek their own happiness in their own way. Then he stopped the work of reform, and considered himself deeply aggrieved. The loss of authority and distrust of the people is the fatal weakness of many systems of reform and well-intentioned projects of benevolence.

Source: Ely, Richard T. "Pullman: A Social Study." *Harper's Magazine* 70 (February 1885): 452-466.

## Document G



Source: Ely, Richard T. "Pullman: A Social Study." *Harper's Magazine* 70 (February 1885): 452-466.

## Document H

Note for a few moments the library. It is a gem. It is one of the most complete of its kind in the United States. It is small and cozy, but very convenient for those who have the privilege of using it. It was the gift of Mr. Pullman to his town...

Still it is not producing the practical results demanded of such an institution. The complaint of employees is that they are expected to pay 25 cents a month or three dollars a year for the use of books, and one dollar per year for every child. This is all right, but with the immense wealth of the Pullman Company they feel that they ought to have an absolutely free library and reading room. The reading room is an adjunct of the library, is very small, and very few of the men...use it. It is too luxurious for the average working man...

Source: William Carwardine, The Pullman Strike, 1894.

# U.S. History Rubric Check Sheet

Scoring Rubric Prepared By Jim Tomlin

- **Thesis**
  - Well developed and clearly focused (8-9)
  - Clear and adequate (5-7)
  - Confused, limited, or missing (2-4)
  - No thesis, provides an inappropriate response (0-1)
- **Document Usage**
  - Sophisticated use of a substantial number of documents (8-9)
  - Several documents used, may be more descriptive than analytical (5-7)
  - Few documents used, significant errors in document interpretation (2-4)
  - No document used, obvious misunderstanding of documents (0-1)
- **Critical Thought**
  - Strong interpretation and analysis (8-9)
  - Limited or superficial analysis, mostly descriptive (5-7)
  - Limited or no understanding of the question (2-4)
  - Shows a complete lack of understanding (0-1)
- **Evidence**
  - Abundant, appropriate, dealing with all aspects of question (8-9)
  - Uses some factual information (5-7)
  - Superficial or missing supporting information (2-4)
  - Little or no evidence (0-1)
- **Writing Style**
  - Well organized and well written (8-9)
  - Acceptable organization and writing (5-7)
  - Weak organization and/or poorly written (2-4)
  - May be incomprehensible (0-1)
- **Error Level**
  - No errors or errors are insignificant (8-9)
  - May contain minor errors (5-7)
  - May contain major errors (2-4)
  - Has substantial factual errors (0-1)