

Pullman: A Company Town that Made History

Robert H. Jackson

The company town, company owned housing for industrial workers, became a common feature of late 19th and early 20th century America. Large companies built housing for workers close to the factories where they worked.

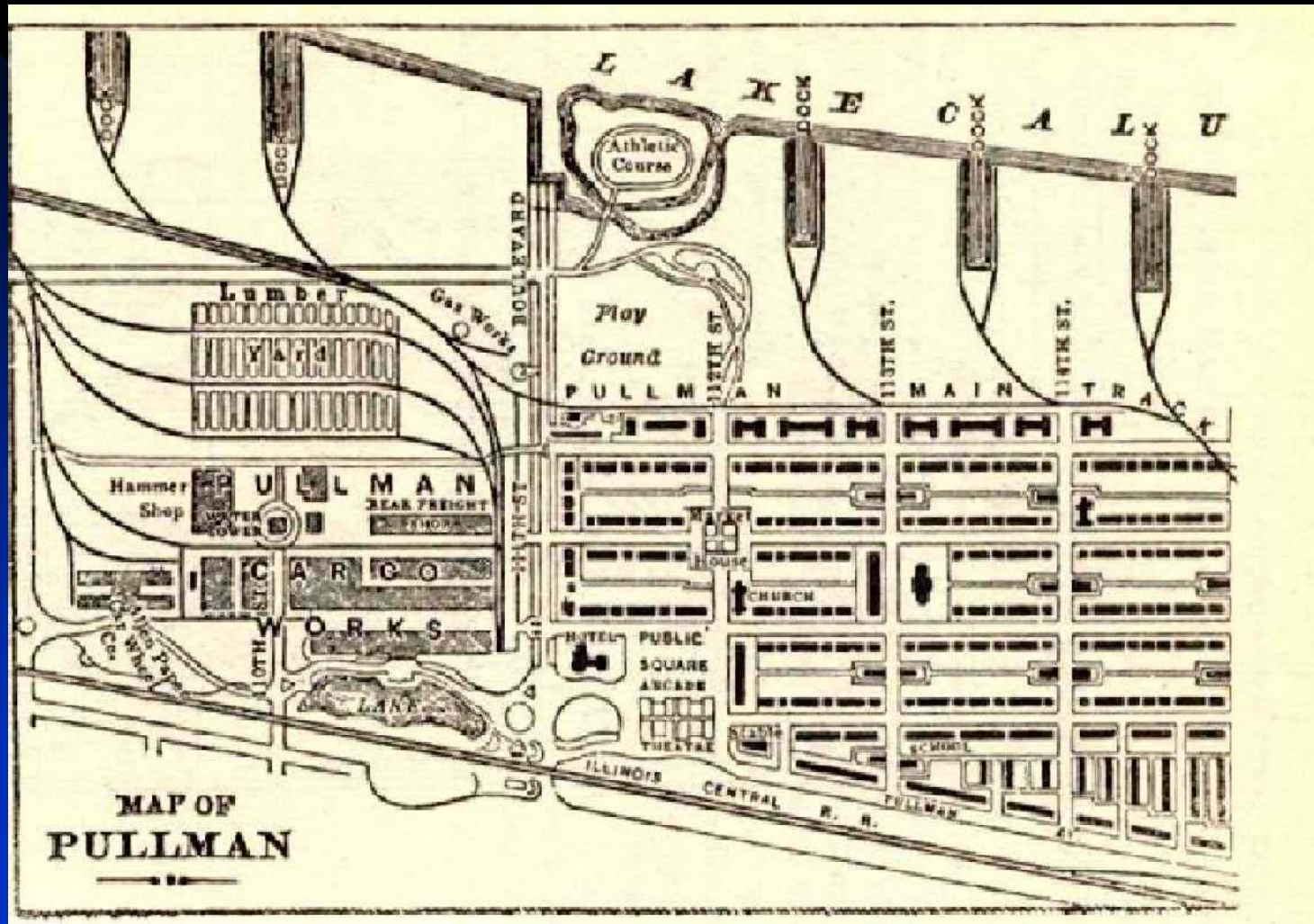
In the late 1880s, George Pullman, the owner of a company that manufactured specialized railroad cars, began the construction of a company town named Pullman, located between Chicago and the Indiana border.

Pullman had begun construction of a new factory to be located outside of Chicago. Pullman's paternalism and self-interest led him to also build a company town. He wanted to offer his workers better living conditions than they had in Chicago, and wanted his workers to not have access to bars and prostitutes in Chicago, because of his concern for morality and because drunk workers did not work well and caused accidents. However, Pullman also expected the town to turn a profit through rents on the housing, rents on the town church, and the rental of space in the town market to merchants. It was the drive for profit that caused the 1894 Pullman strike.

Pullman responded to a recession in 1893 by laying off workers, and reducing the wages of those still employed. At the same time he paid his investors a dividend. In the spring of 1894, the workers, members of the American Railway Union organized by Eugene Debs, went on strike against railroad companies that still used the Pullman cars. The strike turned violent in early July of 1894, when President Grover Cleveland, protecting the large railroad companies, illegally intervened in the, a strike that up to that point had been peaceful. The intervention broke the strike, and Debs spent time in prison for violating a court injunction that had prohibited the strike.

Pullman later was forced to sell the company town, but much of the town survives intact today as a part of Chicago.

A map of Pullman showing the town and factory.



Factory administration building



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Market



Market



Market



Market



Market



Arcade building. Center of social life with a library and other facilities.



Interior of Arcade building



Stables



**Town church that
could be rented by
all demoninations.**



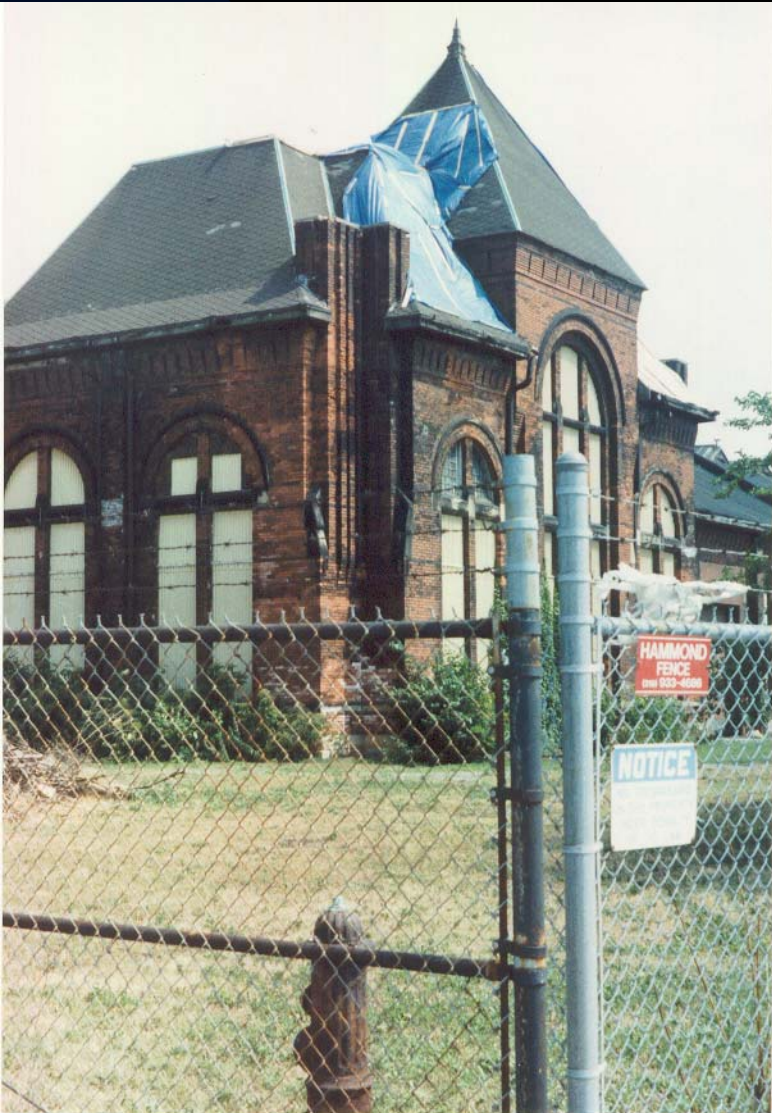
Florence Hotel. Most workers could not afford to visit the hotel.



**Housing in Pullman
ranged from cheaper
tenements to more
expensive units.**



The architect who designed the town used different styles for the houses. Forman's house.



Housing.



Housing.



Housing.



Housing.



Housing.



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Housing.



Green space, an important aspect of Pullman's town.

