

Labor Unions and the Textile Industry

How did the labor movement affect mill workers in Inman?

Grade Level	High School
Standards and Content	United States History and the Constitution Standard 3: Demonstrate an understanding of how innovation and industrialization impacted demographic change, reform movements, and American identity from 1862–1924. USHC.3.CO Compare the strategies and tactics of the Captains of Industry to those of the leaders of the labor movement. This indicator was developed to encourage inquiry into the economic, political, and social differences between industrial leaders and labor leaders. This indicator encourages inquiry into the post-Civil War growth of wealth, the conditions of the working class, and the response to industrialization and urbanization.
Staging the Compelling Question	Have students watch and discuss a 9 minute segment on the Great Textile Strike of 1934 from the History Channel's <i>The Great Depression: Striking Back</i> .

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What were the living conditions like for mill workers?	What were working conditions like for mill workers?	How did the workers and management of Inman Mills respond to the labor movement?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
- Examine primary sources and make a list of observations about life in the Inman mill village.	- Examine primary sources and make a list of observations about working conditions in the Inman Mill.	- Examine primary sources and make a T-chart listing the varied responses of mill workers and management to the labor movement of the 1930s.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
- Excerpt from <i>Textile Town</i>, “Voices from the Village: Lee Loftis” (pp. 122-123) - selections from <i>Mill Town Voices</i> [oral history interviews about growing up in Inman Mills; segments regarding baseball, life during WWII, songs, pranks, extra jobs, etc.] - aerial photo of Inman Mills and mill village [undated; received from Inman Mills] - interior photo of mill house circa 1920 [https://www.knowitall.org/photo/interior-mill-village-home-history-sc-slide-collection]	- 1933 letter to James Chapman from framehands - “Cotton Mill Colic” by Dave McCarn  David McCarn-Cotton Mill Co... - union flier distributed to Inman Mills workers circa 1934 - Lewis Hine photographs of textile mill workers in History of South Carolina Slide Collection [available via knowitall.org]	- 1937 newspaper articles: “Three Carolina Firms Cited in Senators’ Report” and “Report Inman Mills Paid for Espionage” - union flier entitled “Congratulations Inman Workers” and sample ballot - letter from J.L. Stoner - petition to James Chapman - Excerpt from <i>Textile Town</i>, “Voices from the Village: Winslow Howard” (pp. 184-185) [pro-management point of view] - news articles from <i>Textile Tribune</i> [pro-management point of view]

Summative Performance Task	ARGUMENT: <i>How did the labor movement affect mill workers in Inman?</i> Construct a thesis statement and at least two evidence-based paragraphs using specific claims and relevant evidence from sources while acknowledging competing views.
	EXTENSION Locate a recent news article regarding labor unions in South Carolina. Make a connection between the labor movement in the textile industry of the 1930s and 1940s and the current status of labor unions in the state.
Taking Informed Action	UNDERSTAND Study the South Carolina statutes regarding labor unions, what it means to be a “right to work” state, and the percentages of unionized workers in the state over time. ASSESS Complete a fishbone graphic organizer detailing the benefits and drawbacks of being a “right to work” state. ACT Make a research-based recommendation to a local industry about attempts to unionize, to workers about how to advocate for themselves in a “right to work” state, and/or to an employee about whether to join a union.