

Where nineteenth-century entrepreneurs robber barons? essay sample

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Were Nineteenth-Century Entrepreneurs Robber Barons? John Tipple “ Big Business and a New Economy” vs. Alfred D. Chandler “ The Beginnings of Big Business in American Industry” Many people wonder if the big businessmen of the late nineteenth century, also known as the “ Gilded Age,” were “ Robber Barons.” John Tipple, a professor of history, portrays big businessmen of the late nineteenth century as criminal and cheating individuals whose power and greed eroded the nation’s image of traditional American values. Tipple views these powerful businessmen as money hungry robbers, known as “ Robber Barons.” On the other hand, Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., professor of business history, believes that these American entrepreneurs and their big corporations empowered the country’s economy and provided a new beginning for American citizens. Chandler views the operations of entrepreneurs as an important marketing strategy that promotes the expansion of America’s urban market.

John Tipple’s “ Big Businessmen and A New Economy” states that these big corporation businessmen of the “ Gilded Age” were greedy individuals that dominated the economy and may be referred to as “ Robber Barons.” These corrupt businessmen did not care about their consumers or employees. The “ Robber Barons” only cared about how to gain more profit for their corporation. John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie, dominant businessmen of the late nineteenth century, monopolized the oil and steel industries. These shrewd businessmen known as “ Robber Barons” made billions of dollars and controlled their industry. Small businesses could not match the low and fixed prices, production rate, and rebates that the large corporations used to control the national urban market. Big corporations

overran their efforts to compete.. Tipple saw these ruthless businessmen as dishonest and did not believe in their business techniques.

Andrew Chandler, the author of “ The Beginnings of Big Business in American Industry,” believes that the nation went through a major transformation in the late nineteenth century that benefited the American economy. Chandler believes that the new marketing strategies and methods of industrialization of these big business corporations revolutionized the urban market economy. In this highly competitive industrial market, companies began to market products in order to defeat their competitors. He believes that marketing strategies were the key to success. Marketing played a huge role in the economic growth of industry and most of the major industries were being dominated by large enterprises.

Both authors differ greatly in their articles questioning if nineteenth century entrepreneurs were “ Robber Barons.” Tipple sees these big businessmen as dishonest individuals whose ultimate goal was to monopolize their industry. Conversely, Chandler believes that these entrepreneurs of large corporations were revolutionizing the nation’s urban economy and is the key to success and not failure. However, Tipple does agree with Chandler that the “ Robber Barons” helped lower the prices of goods, which drastically helped out the middle and lower classes.

There are many strengths and weaknesses in both arguments. Tipple points out the greed of the “ Robber Barons” and their need for power at all costs, while Chandler sees the big businessmen as “ Captains of Industry,” not lying, cheating, and deceiving “ Robber Barons.” Chandler points out that

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these entrepreneurs revolutionized the urban economy, which is correct, but they were corrupt and ruthless in doing so. These businessmen were only concerned with control and profit. Tipple believes when the newborn corporation on American society was first developed, it enabled the nation to develop more wealth more rapidly. This modern corporate system threatened to destroy the traditional democratic social and political beliefs. Chandler points out that metal industries and those processing agricultural products had developed patterns of internal organization and external competition, which helped corporations dominate the economy.

John Tipple's argument on "Robber Barons" is much more convincing than Alfred Chandler's argument on "Captains of Industry." Tipple gives many examples of how these big businessmen were greedy and money hungry people. Even though John D. Rockefeller was already filthy rich he never quit trying to make money and therefore he became a billionaire. Andrew Carnegie did nearly as well, bringing in profits of \$7, 500, 000 a year. Tipple explains the issue of "Robber Barons" thoroughly with many examples backing his opinion, while Chandler, on the other hand, does not even mention the issue of "Robber Barons" in his argument. Tipple understands the changes the economy went through and does not agree with the "Robber Barons" techniques used to dominate economically.

The major difference between the arguments of the two individuals is that Tipple is more individualistic and concerned with the traditional values of the American culture. Yet Chandler, conversely, is more contemporary and sees the economy being revolutionized and changed for the better. The two

authors disagree because they have extremely different viewpoints. Tipple believes that these entrepreneurs are corrupt money hungry “ Robber Barons” and Chandler believes that they are intelligent businessmen.

In conclusion, the transformation of the economy in the late nineteenth century whether regarded as “ Robber Barons” or “ Captains of Industry” revolutionized the nation’s urban economy. These powerful entrepreneurs were responsible for defining the character of society in the “ Gilded Age.” As said by Tipple, “ Robber Barons” ruthlessly deceived consumers on their way to the top of the industry. These businessmen were money hungry and only profit oriented. It is evident that in today’s society we have benefited greatly from the economic revolution that dates back to the late nineteenth century when big businessmen dominated the business industry.