

Robber Barons vs. Captains of Industry

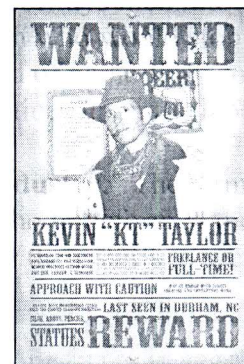
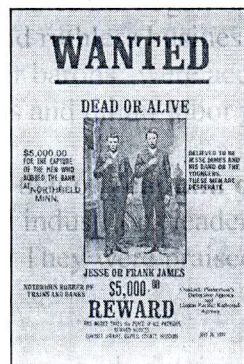
Some feel that the powerful industrialists of the gilded age should be referred to as "**robber barons.**" This view accentuates the negative. It portrays men like Carnegie and Rockefeller and Ford were cruel and ruthless businessmen who would stop at nothing to achieve great wealth. These "robber barons" were accused of exploiting workers and forcing horrible working conditions and unfair labor practices upon the laborer.

Another view of the industrialist is that of "**captain of industry.**" The term captain views these men as viewed ingenious and industrious leaders who transformed the American economy with their business skills. They were praised for their skills as well as for their charity.

In reality the debate over robber barons and captains of industry mirrors views of industrialism itself. Just as there were both positives and negatives to industrialism there were positives and negatives to the leaders of industrialism.

Your assignment is to create a Nation Hero (**Captain of Industry**) and a Wanted (**Robber Baron**) poster of:

Andrew Carnegie
Jay Gould
Leland Stanford
J.P. Morgan
Henry Frick
Colis Huntington
Charles Crocker
John D. Rockefeller
Andrew Mellon
Henry Ford
James B. Duke



Think about: In what ways did they achieve their wealth? What tactics did they use in "building their empires"? What were their accomplishments in business? What was each one's reputation as a business man? How he made his wealth; how he spent it; How he viewed workers; How he viewed "Social Darwinism"; How he and the other Robber Barons posed a threat to the American political system of a "government of the people, by the people and for the people."