



Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business

Harold C. Livesay

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This best-selling biography offers readers a lively and compelling portrait of one of the 20th century's greatest businessmen, and provides an avenue to explore industrialism, capitalism, and the rise of big business.

Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business Details

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From Reader Review Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business for online ebook

Audrey says

THIS IS NOT A BIOGRAPHY - it's an explanation of how big business worked. Very dry.

Matt Leiv says

A brief summary of the business life of Andrew Carnegie, the man who essentially created the modern steel industry. The book touches on the main points of his career, detailing some of his successes and how they came to be. The time line jumps around a bit however, it doesn't gloss over some of his flaws such as: fleeing the country every time he was in danger of bad press. A few facts: he took up to 6 months a year off after becoming wealthy, he was highly hypocritical, he gave away a vast majority of his earnings for philanthropy, his main skill was in management and creating teams of experts to advise him in all aspects of his business. Best summed up by a closing quote, "Carnegie had fulfilled the American dream in its fullest glory- poor immigrant boy to richest man in the world". Quick easy read I would recommend.

Alison Zoccola says

Read this for a class called "Economic History of the United States Since 1865" or as the professor for that class prefers to call it, "American Capitalism 1865-Present." The author is quite sympathetic to Carnegie, but without mythologizing him. Livesay shows how Carnegie had many fortuitous encounters and positions during his rise which allowed him to become the steel magnate that he did, and depicts his flaws, especially his all-consuming ruthlessness. Overall, it sympathetically portrays Carnegie while using him to mythologize the early days of American capitalism after the Civil War. If you're looking for a short primer on Carnegie's origins, rise, and attainment of peak power--and the context in which it occurred--this book is a good pick but should be read with a critical eye.

Cameron says

If you like business and you like history, you should read this short (200 pages) book. I didn't know much about Carnegie, so I found this reasonably interesting, but certainly not revelatory.

This is not a thought-provoking book unless you are interested in the business side and business lessons of Carnegie's life (as opposed to Titan, Rockefeller's 700 page, highly nuanced biography).

Angela says

Considering that the publisher sent it to me blind as a potential textbook supplement, I wasn't expecting much. It's a utilitarian read, but it did help me to understand two of the major industries in western PA: coal and steel.

Christy says

Short read with so many connections to business and immigration in U.S. History. I loved this book and continually refer to it when I teach this time period to my high school students.

Chloe Glynn says

I admittedly did not finish the book. How a man comes to be is far more interesting than how he stays that way. In that tale of becoming, Livesay describes both of the people, time, and place who moulded Carnegie and the fiery will that urged him into being.

Agneta says

More of book on the fine art of business than a bio but easy reading.

Matt Davenport says

I read this whole book essentially in a day. Not because I love steel industry history necessarily....just know it's safe to say I'm writing this review to put off a paper I have to write for class.

Nevertheless, it was somewhat interesting. Andrew Carnegie was a man of polarities, as this book explains. He was a business tycoon in every sense, coming from a poor immigrant family he worked relentlessly to learn from as many people as possible and dominate any industry he entered (telegraphy, railroads, speculating, and ultimately steel). He was one of the first monopoly-owners along with fellas like Rockefeller and Morgan, but he ran his businesses with a very competitive mind. He was for labor rights and was charitable, yet his businesses also often hurt the common man and he definitely "out-maneuvered" a lot of other people into bankruptcy and unemployment in order to strengthen his own wealth.

All that said, for an obscenely wealthy oligarch he was one of the good ones. He (mostly) succeeded through shrewd business practices and true fiscal conservatism instead of entering into price-fixing trusts, and upon retirement gave away his \$300 million dollars worth of steel bonds, built millions of dollars worth of churches, libraries, and public services, and upon his death had truthfully given away essentially all of his obscene wealth to society, fulfilling his own somewhat-more humane interpretation of social Darwinism. Certainly not a perfect man, but a man of strong convictions and moral roots who as a whole was a blessing to our society. Without his steel industry, America may never have become the industrial power that it is.

And while becoming that level of rich requires an unfortunate level of greed/callousness, he compensated it with levels of charity unrivaled amongst his peers.

Joel Roberts says

i thought "and the Rise of Big Business" was an afterthought for the title, but no... the book focuses more on the history of the railroad/steel businesses than it does Andy's life. granted, Andy was a raging workaholic and, thus, much of his life WAS business; however, i would liked to have read more of his behind-the-scene, personal life details to get a fuller sense of who he really was as a person.
