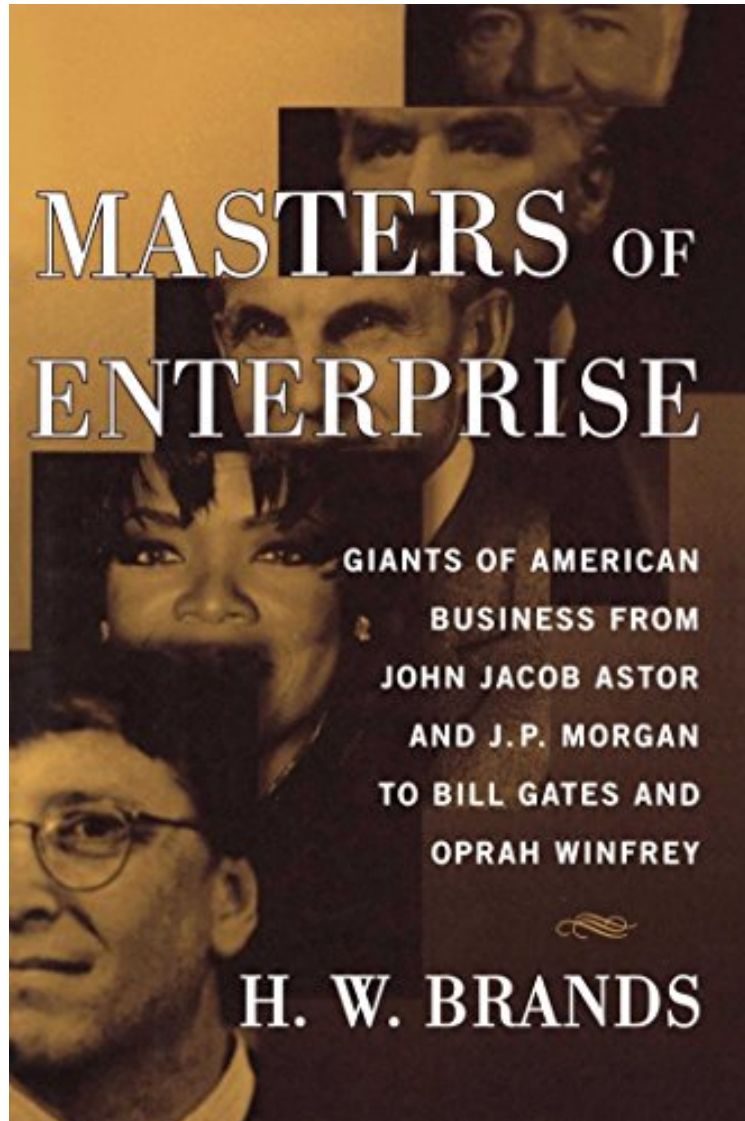


## Masters of Enterprise

*H.W. Brands*

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**H.W. Brands : Masters of Enterprise** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Masters of Enterprise:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A great book to readBy Marc GrenierIn Masters of Enterprise, the author about twenty-five individuals who are or were the most influential people in their respective fields. Each chapter reads like a Reader's Digest condensed version story running some ten to twenty pages in length with enough detail leave the reader satisfied without overcoming them with information.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good Collection of Business HeroicsBy DougH.W. Brands' Masters of Enterprises devotes each of his 25 brief, but enjoyable chapters to a successful entrepreneur. I particularly like this book because the author recognizes

the importance of the individual in building a business dynasty. Tragically, this recognition is very rare from many business historians today who seem more interested in focusing on the post-retirement philanthropic activities of many great industrialists as opposed to the prodigious effort which was required to first accumulate the wealth. This book contains great chapters on all of the well known productive geniuses of the U.S. Industrial Revolution, including the following: John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, J. P. Morgan, Henry Ford and Cornelius Vanderbilt. One of the great values from this book is that it contains a satisfying amount of material on several important and often unsung heroes in business history. This includes, but is not limited to: \* Ray Kroc: The man who turned the McDonalds' franchise into the world's most recognizable fast food empire. \* Robert Woodruff: The man who made the Coca-Cola logo the world's most recognizable logo. \* Alfred Sloan: The man who built up General Motors to defeat the Ford Motor Company as the most dominant automobile manufacturer in the United States. \* Sam Walton: The man who turned Walmart into the retail giant that it is today. \* Andy Grove: The man who made Intel. \* Henry Kaiser: A true renaissance industrialist. He built the Hoover dam, the Bonneville Dam, innovated cement manufacturing, reduced the construction time of cargo ships during WWII to five days (when they previously required 30 days!), and even developed Waikiki beach into a resort. \* H. L. Hunt: discoverer and innovator of oil drilling in East Texas. Unfortunately, he also crippled the industry by lobbying for more government regulation. The main downside of this book is that I think the mix of entrepreneurs covered could have been more interesting. For one, James J. Hill, the great empire builder of the Northwestern Railroads, is conspicuously absent. For example, if it were up to me, I would have added chapters on James J. Hill, E. H. Harriman\*, Warren Buffett, Herbert Dow and C.J. Walker\*\* and removed the chapters on Berry Gordy, Oprah Winfrey, Phil Knight, Ted Turner and Liz Claiborne. If you enjoy books about great individuals in business history, then I also recommend Andrew Bernstein's *The Capitalist Manifesto*, Burton Folsom's *The Myth of the Robber Barons* and Burton Folsom's *Empire Builders*. \* The turnaround genius who converted the struggling Union Pacific Railroad into a transportation empire. \*\* She is probably the most under appreciated businesswoman in history. She not only is the first black woman to be a self-made millionaire, she is the first woman to do so. She made a fortune in designing and marketing beauty products for black women at the beginning of the 20th century, when the U.S. was unfortunately still plagued with discrimination. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a superb book. It charts the lives ... By James A Willson This is a superb book. It charts the lives of the business people who built American industry and shows how they did it. Well worth keeping as a reference book as well as reading.

From the early years of fur trading to today's Silicon Valley empires, America has proved to be an extraordinarily fertile land for the creation of enormous fortunes. Each generation has produced one or two phenomenally successful leaders, often in new industries that caught contemporaries by surprise, and each of these new fortunes reconfirmed the power of fanatically single-minded visionaries. John Jacob Astor and Cornelius Vanderbilt were the first American moguls; John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. P. Morgan were kingpins of the Gilded Age; David Sarnoff, Walt Disney, Ray Kroc, and Sam Walton were masters of mass culture. Today Oprah Winfrey, Andy Grove, and Bill Gates are giants of the Information Age. America has again and again been the land of dizzying mountains of wealth. Here, in a wittily told and deeply insightful history, is a complete set of portraits of America's greatest generators of wealth. Only such a collective study allows us to appreciate what makes the great entrepreneurs really tick. As H. W. Brands shows, these men and women are driven, they are focused, they deeply identify with the businesses they create, and they possess the charisma necessary to persuade other talented people to join them. They do it partly for the money, but mostly for the thrill of creation. The stories told here -- including how Nike got its start as a business-school project for Phil Knight; how Robert Woodruff almost refused to take control of Coca-Cola to spite his father; how Thomas Watson saved himself from prison by rescuing Dayton, Ohio, from a flood; how Jay Gould nearly cornered the gold market; how H. L. Hunt went from gambling at cards to gambling with oil leases -- make for a narrative that is always lively and revealing and often astonishing. An observer in 1850, studying John Jacob Astor, would not have predicted the rise of Henry Ford and the auto industry. Nor would a student of Ford in 1950 have anticipated the takeoff of direct marketing that made Mary Kay Ash a trusted guide for millions of American women. Full of surprising insights, written with H. W. Brands's trademark flair, the stories in *Masters of Enterprise* are must reading for all students of American business history.

.com *Masters of Enterprise* examines the lives of 25 American entrepreneurs, from John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford to Bill Gates and Oprah Winfrey, to find the common ingredients of their success. "First, all had good health and abundant energy," writes H.W. Brands, a professor of history at Texas AM University, "enough for half-a-dozen careers each." The other elements that Brands identifies: all were hungry for success; they were persuasive at getting others on their side; they intensely identified with their work; and each had a burning creative vision. Brands dedicates a chapter to each of the 25, starting chronologically with real estate magnate John Jacob Astor in the late 1700s, and ending with software giant Bill Gates in the late 1990s. He describes the entrepreneurs' background, vision, and major deals, and draws lessons for today's business mavens. Modern-day speculators might find enlightening the story of Jay

Gould's cornering of the gold market in the 1800s, for instance. Brands dramatically describes the maneuvers Gould took to hide his buying and selling--and his underhanded but failed attempts at keeping the U.S. government from flooding the market with gold and driving the price down. And women entrepreneurs of today might find inspiring the lives of cosmetics titan Mary Kay Ash, designer Liz Claiborne, and television and movie star Oprah Winfrey--all overcame obstacles, personal and professional, to become giants in their fields. Others profiled: industrialist Andrew Carnegie, Ray Kroc of McDonald's, Sam Walton of Wal-Mart, Motown founder Berry Gordy, Walt Disney, cable-television pioneer Ted Turner, and Intel's Andrew Grove. Well written and filled with anecdotes, *Masters of Enterprise* should be an entertaining read for entrepreneurs and fans of business biography and history. --Dan Ring

From Publishers Weekly

Readers who can imagine a favorite history professor sitting across the table talking about the evolution of American business will have a pretty good idea of the style, substance and approach taken by Brands, a history professor at Texas AM. Relying entirely on secondary sources, Brands picks 25 businesspeople and shows how they are all the spiritual descendants of one another. While John Jacob Astor and Cornelius Vanderbilt would have difficulty understanding the technology behind the companies Andy Grove and Bill Gates built, they would have completely understood their business models. Brands constantly relates what all 25 people profiled have in common: they work hard; they identify with their work; their desire for success is almost tangible. Perhaps most important, they know exactly what they are trying to create. Fans of any of the business people included here are not likely to learn anything new about them, but that isn't the author's point. It is their connection to one another that matters. Brands does an excellent job at showing that there is a natural evolution to the way American business has developed.

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From Library Journal

The 25 biographies featured here highlight the careers of some of America's best-known businesspeople. From Cornelius Vanderbilt and Andrew Carnegie to Mary Kay Ash and Liz Claiborne. Brands (history, Texas AM Univ.), author of several books on American history, including *T.R.: The Last Romantic* (LJ 10/15/97), ties each portrait to its historical period, providing valuable social context. The brief biographies are weighted toward the early life and career of their subjects. Brands focuses on major events rather than more obscure details and packs the essential information into a few easy-to-read pages. Most of the profiles concern business owners, but Alfred P. Sloan is noted as a manager of General Motors and Thomas J. Watson Sr. as a salesman as well as leader of IBM. Recommended for public and academic libraries.

AA.J. Sobczak, Covina, CA

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