**Robber Barons or Captains of Industry**

**During the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century America experiences a wave of industrialism driven by a group of men known as *industrialists*. There is no doubt that these industrialists were driven by one motive, and that was wealth. However, historians and others debate the title to be bestowed on these men – that of “*captains of industry*” or “*robber barons*”!**

**By identifying these individuals as captains of industry, we offer a positive impression of their achievements as men of inventiveness who hard work and ingenious strategies transformed the American economy of the post-Reconstruction era and the early 20th century. These men are to also be honored for their charitable activities (philanthropy).**

**In extending the title of robber baron to these men, we emphasize the cruel and self-centered entrepreneurs who took advantage of the worker, whether it be immigrant, female, or child to accumulate wealth. The factory was a place where the worker experienced harsh conditions and poor pay.**

**ASSIGNMENT: Complete the following statement.**

1. **Visit the links below. Read the selections. Create a brief fact sheet on each of the individuals below.** 
   * **Describe the contributions of one of the industrialists listed below. 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 his reputation as a business man?**
2. **Write a response to the prompt: *The industrialists of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries are best characterized as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .(robber barons and /or captains of industry) Defend your choice*. (paragraph form; minimum 7 sentences)**

**Links**

**Carnegie**

[**http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/carnegie/peopleevents/pande01.html**](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/carnegie/peopleevents/pande01.html)

**Cornelius Vanderbilt**

[**http://www.bartleby.com/**](http://www.bartleby.com/)

[**http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h845.html**](http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h845.html)

**Jay Gould**

[**http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h866.html**](http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h866.html)

[**http://www.famousamericans.net/jaygould/**](http://www.famousamericans.net/jaygould/)

**J. Pierpoint Morgan**

[**http://www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus/web10/features/bio/B14.html**](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus/web10/features/bio/B14.html)

[**http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAmorgan.htm**](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAmorgan.htm)

**John D. Rockefeller**

[**http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rockefellers/peopleevents/p\_rock\_jsr.html**](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rockefellers/peopleevents/p_rock_jsr.html)

**Henry Frick**

[**http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/goldman/peopleevents/p\_frick.html**](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/goldman/peopleevents/p_frick.html)