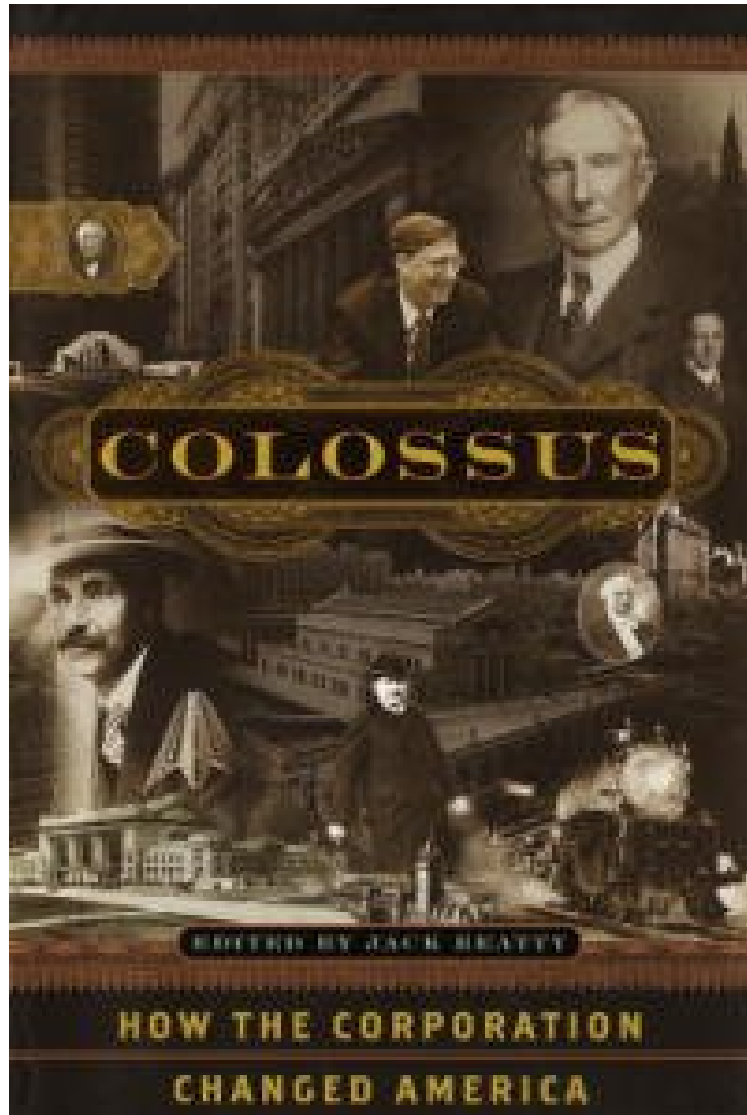


[FREE] Colossus: How the Corporation Changed America

Colossus: How the Corporation Changed America

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From Crown Business : Colossus: How the Corporation Changed America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Colossus: How the Corporation Changed America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Great BuyBy Wes McGeeWhat a book, no kidding a must read to see who, what, and the games that corporations have played on this country.Power is power and man did these guys use it and we are not seeing what is the outcome of their power and there factors/agents.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The subtitle says it allBy K. Coscino"How the corporation changed America"---from the government charters brought to our shores by the first Europeans to develop the means to enrich their mother countries, to the challenges of the multinational conglomerates of the present, "Colossus" records what made

American capitalism. But it's not altogether a pretty story. Following colonial beginnings, the modern curtain rises on the drive, innovation and creativity of the railroad, automotive, communications and energy industries which provided America with boundless potential for financial growth and expansion. But their success soon became tainted by the formation of restrictive monopolies, which required government intervention to restore competition. Even in the wake of such humbling action, the heads of corporations began to separate themselves from the owners of the business (stockholders), believing they were accountable only to themselves. And increasingly, managers were no longer drawn from the ranks of the industry itself but rather were recruited from outside the firm for their skills as lawyers and financiers. These short-sighted "money men", completely out of touch with the real objectives of the firm, ushered in a time of mergers and takeovers which concentrated on profit over product. Out went the risk and venture capital which had consistently produced the innovative goods and services that made them successful in the first place. They quickly fell victim to foreign competition and by their folly forever erased the once long-envied preeminence of American industry in the eyes of the world. There can be no better example of this tragedy than outdated General Motors losing the battle against more progressive Japanese imports. But owners are striking back by firing unrealistically paid, top-heavy management and reasserting their roll in the more realistic operation of the company. The result in many cases has been complete operational restructuring (read "downsizing") and the elimination of marginally producing areas to return the firm to profitability. It unfortunately also entailed massive layoffs which had devastating, demoralizing effects on families from national levels to small communities, all of whom viewed themselves first and foremost as "company people", committed to the firm which they had always felt was committed to them---the poignant example used here is the breakup of the family-owned Safeway grocery chain and the complete disillusionment of its longterm employees who were literally thrown out to find any jobs they could. The book mentioned a movie called "The Tower", which starred William Holden, Frederic March and Nina Foch. I have seen the movie and recommend it highly. It well summarizes this profit-versus-product dilemma American business faced in the 50s. Inasmuch as our representative form of government was in largest part an outgrowth of the early charters, "Colossus" traces a fascinating social as well as financial experiment.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Vivid Look at the Rise and Impact of Corporations By Bohdan Kot

The aptly named Colossus is an eclectic anthology portraying the rise of the corporation from the 1600s to the present. Editor Jack Beatty's own essays and writers ranging from Charles Dickens to Paul Johnson to James Hedges vividly demonstrate the corporation's impact. This collection of biographies, literature, historical documents, newspaper articles and so on are in roughly chronological order, with each prefaced by an incisive explanation by Beatty. Beatty's through dissection begins with the Virginia Company of London (1606) - the first corporation. He skillfully takes us to the 1700s as corporations begin to replace partnerships. Betty's coverage of the years 1820 to 1860 - when corporations begin to flourish - is extremely informative, yet lacks the energy exhibited by the rest of the book. By the late 1800s through the early 1900s, corporations begin to grow enormously in size and power. Betty chronicles this period with great verve through his richly detailed selections. Beatty resurrects the Great Depression quite effectively via John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, while his excerpt from Joseph Heller's *Something Happened* succinctly illustrates the paranoia of office politics during the era after World War II. Another superb choice is Peter Drucker's short essay showcasing the hostile takeovers that were so prominent in the 1980s. Also, Susan Faludi's Pulitzer-prize winning expose of the 1986 leveraged buyout of Safeway Stores is a beautifully written piece of reportage about the aftermath. Corporations have committed their share of sins and embodied their portion of moral relativism. Social responsibility is a pervasive theme in this book, beginning with Beatty's preface, which reminds us that intervention must come from stockholders, as well as the public at large. He writes, "The corporation is no longer pitched against society; the corporation is society." Bohdan Kot

Big business has been the lever of big change over time in American life, change in economy, society, politics, and the envelope of existence--in work, mores, language, consciousness, and the pace and bite of time. Such is the pattern revealed by this historical mosaic. --From the Preface

Weaving historical source material with his own incisive analysis, Jack Beatty traces the rise of the American corporation, from its beginnings in the 17th century through today, illustrating how it has come to loom colossus-like over the economy, society, culture, and politics. Through an imaginative selection of readings made up of historical and contemporary documents, opinion pieces, reportage, biographies, company histories, and scenes from literature, all introduced and explicated by Beatty, *Colossus* makes a convincing case that it is the American corporation that has been, for good and ill, the primary maker and manager of change in modern America. In this anthology, readers are shown how a developing "business civilization" has affected domestic life in America, how labor disputes have embodied a struggle between freedom and fraternity, how corporate leaders have faced the recurring dilemma of balancing fiduciary with social responsibility, and how Silicon Valley and Wall Street have come to dwarf Capitol Hill in pervasiveness of influence. From the slave trade and the transcontinental railroad to the software giants and the multimedia conglomerates, *Colossus* reveals how the corporation emerged as the foundation of representative government in the United States, as the builder of the young nation's public works, as the conqueror of American space, and as the inexhaustible engine of economic growth from the Civil War to today. At the same time, *Colossus* gives perspective to the century-old debate over the corporation's

place in the good society. A saga of freedom and domination, success and failure, creativity and conformity, entrepreneurship and monopoly, high purpose and low practice, *Colossus* is a major historical achievement. From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers Weekly In this anthology of news articles, critical essays and excerpts from biographies, letters and literature, editor Beatty (*The World According to Peter Drucker*), a senior editor at the *Atlantic Monthly*, charts a history of for-profit corporations from the 17th century to today from the Massachusetts Bay Company and the first railroads to Safeway and Time Warner. Contributors as diverse as a mill worker named Sarah Hodgson, John Steinbeck, 19th-century Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney and Susan Faludi address issues ranging from child labor, strikes and capitalist indoctrination in schools to scientific management and the hostile takeover. The focus of the book drifts from a history of for-profit corporations to an account of large-scale business enterprises regardless of legal form. However, some inclusions fit neither vision, such as a commentary by Charles Dickens on American spitting and a 30-page discussion of ATT advertising from 1906 to 1939. More confusing are the sometimes sloppy attributions: an extreme example begins with a fragment from a quotation by Alexander Hamilton followed by a quote from "two historians of the 1790's" without further elaboration on who they were and whether they wrote during the period or studied it. Drawing mostly on recent secondary sources, the book encompasses a range of viewpoints, from intellectuals to laborers, yielding a sometimes muddled but often richly textured overview. Agent, Rafe Sagalyn. (On-sale Apr. 10) Forecast: Aimed at the sophisticated audience among whom Ron Chernow (*The House of Morgan*, etc.) has enjoyed great success, this flawed yet intriguing collection won't come close to Chernow's sales, but should find a solid niche. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Beautifully edited by *Atlantic Monthly* senior editor Beatty (*The World According to Peter Drucker*), this richly detailed anthology traces the rise of the American corporation from its roots in Colonial America to its present dominance of the American economy, society, and culture. The book's greatest strength is its evenhanded approach to complicated topics, such as the corporation's place in society, the concept of limited liability, and the role that women, children, minorities, and slaves played in the development of the American corporate state. Equally impressive is the finely honed collection of readings that bring to life the people, technological innovations, places, and events that shaped the corporation as we know it today. Especially useful are sections highlighting the contributions of John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Edward Harriman, Henry Clay Frick, Henry Ford, J. Pierpont Morgan, Thomas J. Watson, Alfred P. Sloan, Frederick Winslow Taylor, and Bill Gates. Essential for both academic and public libraries. Norman B. Hutcherson, California State Univ., Bakersfield Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* Writers looking at the effects of globalization all seem to make the point that many transnational corporations are larger than most countries and that these companies have supplanted the role of governments in setting policy. At the same time, at least one failed presidential candidate focused his campaign on challenging growing corporate power. But Beatty's collection of historical essays and literary pieces shows that business and the corporation have driven political, cultural, social, and economic change throughout U.S. history. Beatty is a senior editor at the *Atlantic Monthly* and the author of *The World according to Peter Drucker* (1998). Much of the writing here is his, but this wide-ranging anthology includes the work of authors as diverse as Emily Dickinson and Peter Drucker. Together, the works, which are tied together by Beatty's commentary, examine our ambivalence toward the corporation, its "place in the good society," and its role in and its effects on slavery, bloody labor disputes, child exploitation, the military and academic industrial complexes, women in the workplace, downsizing, etc. David Rouse Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved