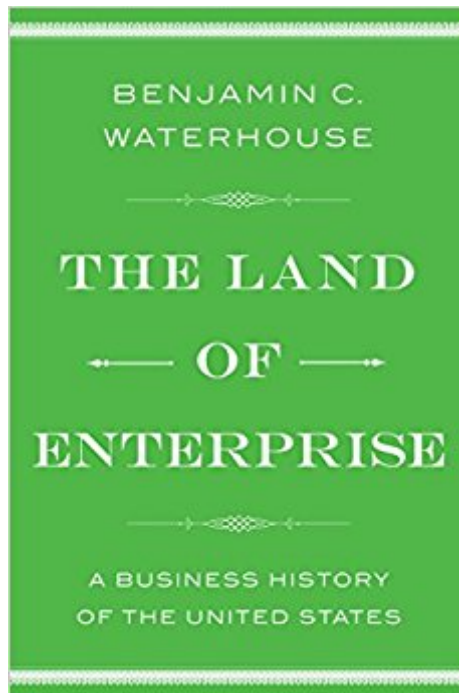




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# The Land Of Enterprise: A Business History Of The United States



## Synopsis

A new, gripping history of America—told through the executives, bankers, farmers, and politicians who paved the way from colonial times to the present—reveals that this country was founded as much on the search for wealth and prosperity as the desire for freedom. The Land of Enterprise charts the development of American business from the colonial period to the present. It explores the nation's evolving economic, social, and political landscape by examining how different types of enterprising activities rose and fell, how new labor and production technologies supplanted old ones—and at what costs—and how Americans of all stripes responded to the tumultuous world of business. In particular, historian Benjamin Waterhouse highlights the changes in business practices, the development of different industries and sectors, and the complex relationship between business and national politics. From executives and bankers to farmers and sailors, from union leaders to politicians to slaves, business history is American history, and Waterhouse pays tribute to the unnamed millions who traded their labor (sometimes by choice, often not) or decided what products to consume (sometimes informed, often not). Their story includes those who fought against what they saw as an oppressive system of exploitation as well as those who defended free markets from any outside intervention. The Land of Enterprise is not only a comprehensive look into our past achievements, but offers clues as to how to confront the challenges of today's world: globalization, income inequality, and technological change.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster (April 11, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1476766649

ISBN-13: 978-1476766645

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.3 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #39,389 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #105 in Books > Business & Money > Biography & History > Economic History #136 in Books > Business & Money > Biography & History > Company Profiles #338 in Books > Business & Money > Investing

## Customer Reviews

"Teachers are trying to meet the growing demand for sweeping surveys on American business

history have long lamented the lack of a readable overview on the subject. Benjamin Waterhouse's book is more than fits the bill. This is a fast-paced, lively and concise narrative is the perfect place to begin for anyone interested in the history of capitalism in the United States." — Stephen Mihm, author of *Crisis Economics* and *A Nation of Counterfeiters*

Waterhouse's new history is my go-to book for understanding the long sweep of American business. Want to understand how we got from the Massachusetts Bay Company to Wal-Mart? This is your book. — Louis Hyman, author of *Debtor Nation* and *American Capitalism*

"An invaluable overview of the central role business has played in American history, from conquest and enslavement to the financial crisis of 2008. Waterhouse adroitly synthesizes the most significant scholarship in business history into a brisk, engaging narrative. He's an admirably clear guide both to the shifting organization of American enterprise and to the legal, financial, and managerial ecologies that have enabled it." — Bethany E. Moreton, author of *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*

Benjamin C. Waterhouse is a historian of American politics, business, and capitalism. Waterhouse graduated from Princeton University and received his PhD in history from Harvard University. He is currently an associate professor and Grauer Scholar at the University of North Carolina. He lives in Chapel Hill with his wife Daniela and their two children. He is the author of *Lobbying America: The Politics of Business from Nixon to NAFTA* and *The Land of Enterprise: A Business History of the United States*.

Benjamin Waterhouse has produced an excellent and rapidly-paced history of American business and American politics. This easy-reading book will naturally fall into the academic category of an introductory course for undergraduates, but the book should be required reading for first year MBA students who never studied business when an undergraduate. Students of history would do well to scan the historical concepts presented in the book. But the book is more than academic. "The Land of Enterprise," through the insight and research skill of its author, gracefully and effortlessly blends American business and political histories. The author, without revealing his own biases, successfully tells the story of America's ever-changing business, economic, and political interactions and its results on the nation and its impacts on citizens from the nation's founding up to the 2016 election. This book should be on reading lists not only for historians but for leaders of small and large companies and the "everyday" reader who wants to learn how the United States developed over the years.

This is a useful book because it is a history of the USA from a business perspective that roughly spans 200 years in 200 pages. If you follow US and business history at all, some of this will be familiar - the boom of railroads; the boom of giant companies (eg US Steel); the progressivist pushback (e.g. break up Standard Oil); the boom of "conglomerates" in the 60s, and so on. However, it's very nice to see the parade in one reading span of a few hours and a couple hundred pages. While not an anti-business or anti-conservative book, the book leads by reference to some other works that raise concerns about the impact of Big Business on US politics. For the interplay of government and business, see the author's own book on Lobbying America: Politics of Business from Nixon to Nafta. Appearing in August 2017, you might like Democracy in Chains, a profile of Nobel laureate James Buchanan and books like Dark Money, about the Koch brothers, or the book The Associational State by Balogh.

One can never tire of an interesting history when presented in an informative, engaging way. This book helps tell the story of the United States of America, as seen through the lens of business, from the early colonial days to the present-day. The author relays first-person accounts of many including farmers, politicians, businessmen and financiers, noting the political, social, economic and business changes that have occurred in good and bad times. This is a well-written book that can keep you company for some time and should be guaranteed to teach you a fair few things. If you desire more, there are extensive notes and references to follow later. It can appear to be a complex read at times, due to the sheer mass of material presented, yet it is accessible, interesting and likely to appeal to more than just history buffs!

The author starts with a good, objective view of the history of business in America, but becomes an apologist for 20th Century Progressivism. He finishes by completely ignoring the deleterious results of Obama administration's policies on the economy and business. Of particular note is the failure to mention Obama's hand in pushing home mortgages to unqualified buyers, and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's hand in the home mortgage derivative meltdown.

If you voted for Hillary and know nothing about business, this is passable. Despite big name credentials (Princeton-Harvard), the writing is dull and pretty much all cliché. John D. Rockefeller's father refused to sell to Rockefeller and quickly went out of business. Rockefeller was tough on competitors but great for consumers-- he brought down costs 90 percent over 30 years. I am sure

this is news to Waterhouse.

Excellent book.

Well presented historical view of the impact of business on the development of the USA.

After watching the author on BookTV read portions of Chapter 10, I was struck with his one-sided analysis. He notes that during the 60's capitalism was under attack and that conservative political groups responded politically to defend it. But he remained silent as to the source of the anti-capitalist attacks, as though to ignore the decades long class struggle (so publicly embraced by the very opponents of capitalism he acknowledges) waged by then Soviet Communism and it's New Left adherents.

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