

churches and church-related events in another. The book is a worthy reference tool, but read straight through, it makes even church history seem to be "just one damned thing after another."

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The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business. By Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977. Pp. xvi, 608. Figures, maps, tables, appendixes, notes, index. \$18.50.)

This important book is more than a major contribution to business history. Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., describes and explains the rise of modern managerial capitalism and the business class that controls and directs it. His book, therefore, is a significant analysis of the nature of modern American society.

Unlike many economists who view the economy through the lens of supply and demand in the marketplace, Chandler stresses the imperatives of technological change and innovation. In those industries in which technology speeded production and distribution, business leaders faced new opportunities and new problems. The economies of speed allowed for mass production and distribution and the potential for massive profits but also created problems of organization and control. The free market no longer adequately served to supply raw materials and fuel and to move finished goods to the consumer. Business leaders therefore "internalized" both the acquisition of needed supplies and the distribution of finished goods. "The visible hand of managerial direction had replaced the invisible hand of market forces in coordinating the flow of goods from the suppliers of raw and semifinished materials to the retailer and ultimate consumer" (p. 286).

Big business, therefore, was created by business leaders seeking not only to eliminate competition in order to control prices and otherwise mitigate the rigors of competition but also—and more importantly—to control and coordinate the flow of supplies and the distribution of finished goods. Only industries capable of mass production and distribution experienced successful consolidations. Where tools and machines merely replaced hand labor (for example, in construction or clothing manufacturing) consolidation brought diseconomies. But in other industries, such as steel, electrical equipment, and chemi-

cals, technology made possible "continuous-process production" which not only replaced hand labor but restructured the entire production process, bringing startling increases in output. Where production remained discontinuous, business remained small and price competitive and continued to rely upon the market for supplies and distribution. Elsewhere, firms became big businesses—oligopolies—which internalized their acquisition of supplies and their distribution network. The huge firms required revolutionary changes in management, and control passed from owners to specially trained and experienced managers.

A brief review can only sketch in the outlines of this rich, closely argued, and meticulously documented book. It is at once a general history of American business and an explanation for the rise of big business as a peculiarly modern phenomenon. It carefully summarizes the complex details of the history of individual firms and at the same time enhances the general understanding of the social and economic history of modern America. While doing all of this it considers a whole range of problems that have vexed historians over the past generation—for example, the role of railroads in American economic development, the place of the robber barons in the history of business, and the contributions of financiers and expanding capital markets to economic development. And, finally, the book is beautifully written and clearly organized.

It is perhaps unfair to criticize a book that promises and delivers so much. Yet there are certain areas that Chandler ignores or treats very lightly. He gives inadequate attention to the role of business leaders in managing demand and in managing politics, and, by choosing to ignore labor, he fails to consider the significance of the efforts of business leaders to manage and control the work force. These are areas that other scholars might profitably pursue, armed with the insights and the data Chandler provides in this monumental volume.

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