

### Taking on the Trust: The Epic Battle of Ida Tarbell and John D. Rockefeller

Steve Weinberg



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How a female investigative journalist brought down the world's greatest tycoon and broke up the Standard Oil monopoly.

Long before the rise of mega-corporations like Wal-Mart and Microsoft, Standard Oil controlled the oil industry with a monopolistic force unprecedented in American business history. Undaunted by the ruthless power of its owner, John D. Rockefeller (1839–1937), a fearless and ambitious reporter named Ida Minerva Tarbell (1857–1944) confronted the company known simply as "The Trust." Through her peerless fact gathering and devastating prose, Tarbell, a muckraking reporter at McClure's magazine, pioneered the new practice of investigative journalism. Her shocking discoveries about Standard Oil and Rockefeller led, inexorably, to a dramatic confrontation during the opening decade of the twentieth century that culminated in the landmark 1911 Supreme Court antitrust decision breaking up the monopolies and forever altering the landscape of modern American industry. Based on extensive research in the Tarbell and Rockefeller archives, Taking on the Trust is a vivid and dramatic history of the Progressive Era with powerful resonance for the first decades of the twenty-first century.



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