

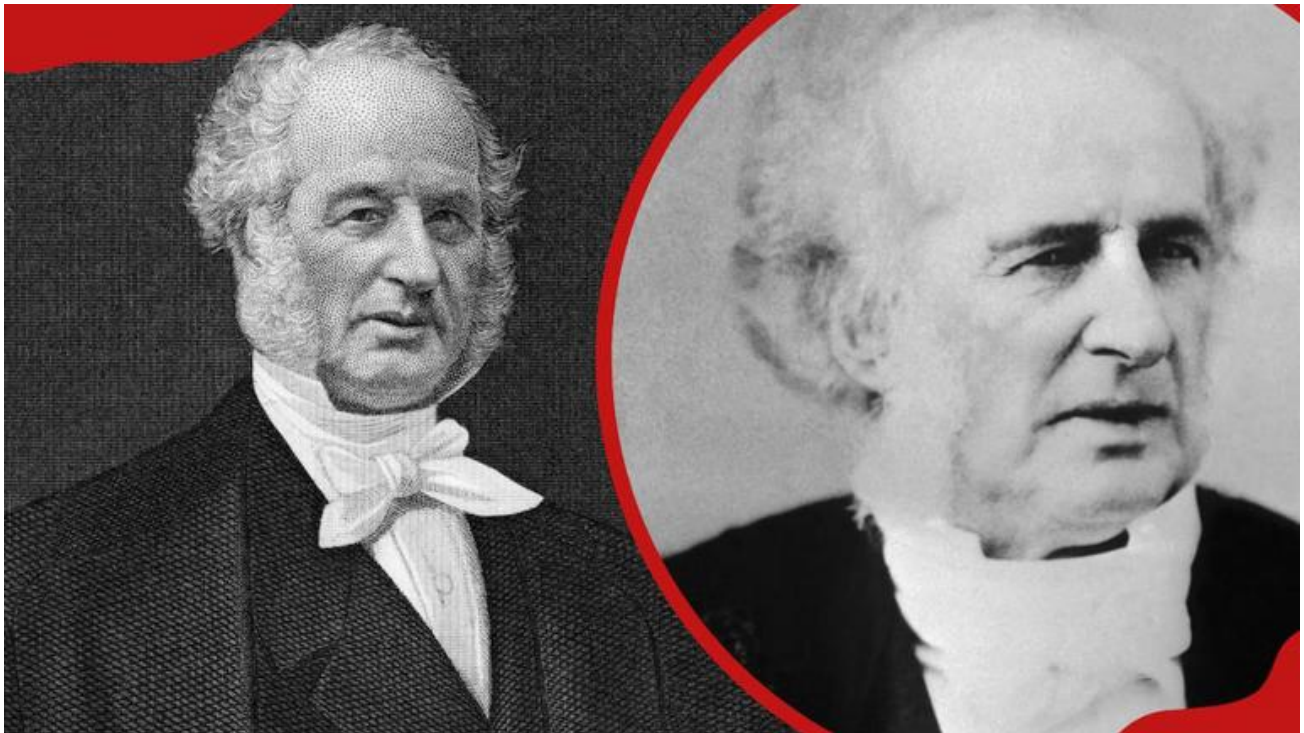
[How did Cornelius Vanderbilt treat his workers leading to the railroad strike? \(msn.com\)](#)

How did Cornelius Vanderbilt treat his workers leading to the railroad strike?

Story by Lilian Wanjala

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Cornelius Vanderbilt was an industrialist, shipping and railroad magnate, and philanthropist from the United States. He is widely regarded as a self-made multi-millionaire who became one of the wealthiest Americans of the 19th century. Many people have been interested in discovering more about how Vanderbilt treated his staff. So, how did Cornelius Vanderbilt treat his workers?



A picture of American business magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt. Photo: Kean Collection, Bettmann (modified by author) Source: Getty Images© Provided by Tuko

Cornelius Vanderbilt began his career at the age of 11, working with his father to ferry cargo and passengers between Staten Island and Manhattan. He later built a successful transportation empire in shipping and railroads.

Cornelius Vanderbilt's profile summary

Full name	Cornelius Vanderbilt
Nickname	The Commodore
Gender	Male
Date of birth	27 May 1794
Zodiac sign	Aries
Died on	4 January 1877
Age at the time of death	82 years old
Place of birth	Staten Island, New York, United States
Place of death	Manhattan, New York, United States
Nationality	American
Ethnicity	White
Religion	Christianity
Sexuality	Straight
Hair colour	Grey
Eye colour	Blue
Father	Cornelius van Derbilt
Mother	Phebe Hand
Siblings	9
Marital status	Married
Wife	Sophia Johnson, Frank Armstrong Crawford
Children	William Henry Vanderbilt, Cornelius Jeremiah, Phebe Jane, Sophia Johnson, Mary Alicia, George Washington, Frances Lavinia, Ethelinda, Emily Almira, Maria Louisa, Eliza, Catherine Juliette
Profession	Industrialist, entrepreneur, philanthropist
Net worth	\$185 billion

Who was Cornelius Vanderbilt?

Cornelius Vanderbilt was born on 27 May 1794 in Staten Island, New York, United States. His parents were Cornelius van Derbilt and Phebe Hand. His parents were farmers. His father died in 1832, while his mom died on 22 June 1854.

The Staten Island native grew up alongside his nine siblings. He quit school at the age of 11 to work with his father in ferrying cargo and passengers between Staten Island and Manhattan. In 1890, Vanderbilt began a passenger ferry business in New York Harbour with one boat. This was the genesis of the creation of his successful transportation empire.

TUKO

CORNELIUS VANDERBILT

» He was an industrialist, shipping and railroad magnate

5 facts

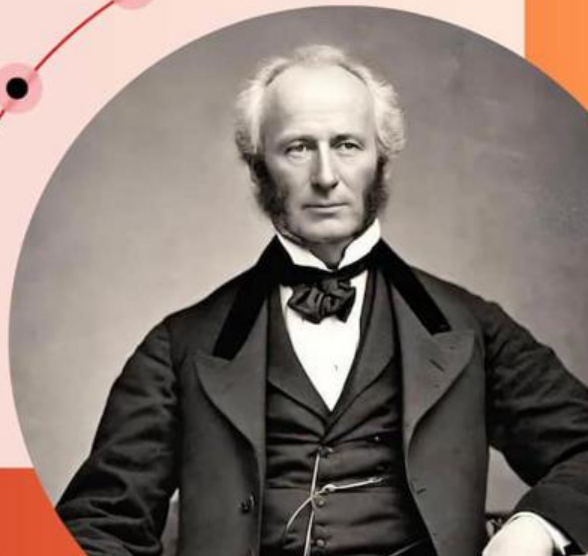
He was born on 27 May 1794

His parents were Cornelius van Derbilt and Phebe Hand

He had an estimated net worth of about \$185 billion

He ventured into the railroad industry in the 1860s

He died on 4 January 1877 in Manhattan at the age of 82



Five facts about Cornelius Vanderbilt. Photo: @quickeasybookreviews Source: UGC© Provided by Tuko

Vanderbilt learnt the steamship business while working as a steamship captain for Thomas Gibbons from 1818 to 1829. The renowned businessman later launched his own steamship company. Eventually, he became one of the country's largest steamship operators, owning a fleet of steamships along the east coast.

The American tycoon ventured into the railroad industry in the 1860s, again building another empire. After consolidating several private railways, Vanderbilt created one of the great railroad monopolies in America. He also bought stock or control of several private railroads, such as the Hudson River Railroad in 1864 and the New York Central Railroad in 1867.

He later became a philanthropist. He donated \$1 million to Central University in Nashville, Tennessee. The university's name was later changed to Vanderbilt University. The entrepreneur is remembered for his business acumen, tactics and strategies. He is also regarded as one of the wealthiest Americans of the 19th century.

How did Vanderbilt treat his workers?

Even though Vanderbilt thrived in all his business ventures, he was known to be an oppressive employer keen on minimising labour costs at all times. Vanderbilt treatment of workers was characterised by exploitation of employees, particularly regarding benefits and wages.

For example, he gave his workers low wages, accompanied by long working hours and hard physical labour. Some quarters argue that Cornelius was ruthless to his workers, given that there were no labour laws then. There are also reports that he was heartless towards workers who tried to form unions or participate in strikes.

What made Cornelius Vanderbilt a robber baron?

Cornelius Vanderbilt was regarded as a robber baron since some of his business practices were deemed to be unethical or unscrupulous. His negative business ideas included deliberately restricting output to charge higher prices. He also engaged in employee or environmental abuse and stock market manipulation.

For instance, in 1863 and 1864, the railroad magnate and Jay Gould, his chief opponent in the Erie Railway Company, compromised state officials during a public fight over control of the company.

Vanderbilt normally used his monopolistic tactics to force his rival railroad companies out of business. He often bought out his competitors or offered customers lower rates to kill other railroad companies. This allowed him to control the market and charge higher rates to customers.

What caused railroad strike of 1877?



A train moving on a railway track. Photo: @quickeasybookreviews Source: UGC© Provided by Tuko

The rampant mistreatment of workers by employers at that time led to the railroad strike of 1877. It was the first widespread labour strike in the United States. The strike started on 16 July 1877 by Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad workers. After the company's president, John W. Garrett, decided to cut the wages of his workers by ten per cent to increase dividends by the same percentage.

Later, workers on Cleveland lines joined the strike after the head of the line, William Henry Vanderbilt, imposed a 20% wage cut on them. William Henry was the eldest son of Cornelius Vanderbilt. He acquired his father's fortune after Cornelius' death on 4 January 1877. Like his late father, he cut workers' pay and increased their workload.

The 1877 national strike in the United States yielded no fruits. Industrialists continued to cut wages, break union laws, and frustrate workers. However, workers realised henceforth that they needed formal and official representation in trade unions to champion their rights.

Contribution of Vanderbilt during the Industrial Revolution

Cornelius Vanderbilt is considered a legendary personality of American industry and capitalism in the 19th century. He adopted new technologies like steamships and railroads to build a business empire. Most of his approaches to the unregulated free market have become synonymous with the Industrial Revolution.

Frequently asked questions

1. Who was Cornelius Vanderbilt? Cornelius Vanderbilt was an American industrialist, shipping and railroad magnate, and philanthropist of the 19th century.
2. When was Cornelius Vanderbilt born? Cornelius Vanderbilt was born on 27 May 1794 in Staten Island, New York, United States. He died on 4 January 1877 in Manhattan, New York, United States.
3. How did Cornelius Vanderbilt treat his workers? Cornelius Vanderbilt always mistreated his workers by paying them low wages and forcing them to work long hours and do hard physical labour.
4. What did Cornelius Vanderbilt do that was good? Cornelius Vanderbilt emerged as one of America's most well-known industrialists of the 19th century. He eventually created the country's first railroad empire.
5. How did Cornelius Vanderbilt treat his wealth? Cornelius Vanderbilt never spent much on himself. He always reinvested his money back into growing his empire.
6. How much was Cornelius Vanderbilt worth? According to Celebrity Net Worth, Cornelius Vanderbilt was worth \$185 billion. He acquired his wealth from his business career.

Wrapping up

How did Cornelius Vanderbilt treat his workers? Cornelius Vanderbilt was an oppressive employer whose main goal was to minimise labour costs at all times. He paid his workers low wages while exposing them to long working hours and hard physical labour. He is remembered as one of the great American industrialists of the 19th century.

Tuko.co.ke published an article about Andrew J Sansone's net worth. Andrew is a businessman from the United States, widely known for being the former husband of TV anchor Julie Banderas.

He is an entrepreneur and a financial advisor for Allied Wealth Partners. He also worked as a business consultant with Hero Media Group. Read this article to learn more interesting facts about him.