THE WEALTHIEST
HISTORICAL FIGURES
AND HOW MUCH THEY WOULD BE WORTH
IN TODAY'S DOLLARS

Legend:
- Rumored
- Very Rough Estimate
- Educated Guess
- Alive Now
- Emperor/Monarch
- Banking
- Monopoly
- Other Business/Technology
- Money in Their Day
- Range

AUGUSTUS CAESAR 63 BC–14 AD
300 sesterces per Roman citizen
$4.6 TRILLION — 9.2 times the length of this bar
- His personal wealth was worth one-fifth of the empire's economy, an empire that accounted for between 25% and 30% of the world's economic output.

JAKOB FUGGER 1459–1525
2 million guilders
$400–500 BILLION
- His wealth accounted for 2% of Europe's GDP at the time of his death.
- He created the Fuggerei, the first affordable housing project.

MANSA MUSA I OF MALI 1280–1337
Many tons of pure gold
$400–415 BILLION
- His wealth was unimaginable to his contemporaries – it's hard to say if it was exaggerated or understated.
- He had control of the region's salt and gold production.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER 1839–1937 *Standard Oil Company*
$1.4 billion
$253–400 BILLION
- He founded the University of Chicago and hundreds of libraries across the U.S.
- The Rockefellers are still one of the wealthiest families in the U.S. today.

ANDREW CARNEGIE 1835–1919 *Carnegie Steel Company*
$475 million
$310–372 BILLION
- At one point, Carnegie's hundreds of millions accounted for 0.60% of the U.S. GDP.
- He left very little to his family when he died, choosing instead to invest in libraries and universities.

NICHOLAS II OF RUSSIA 1868–1918
12.5–17.5 million rubles of personal wealth, plus annual income
$250–300 BILLION
- His wealth is very speculative.
- The czar was almost penniless by the end of the year, but he got an annual income of 24 million rubles.

OSMAN ALI KHAN, ASAF JAH VII 1886–1967
Roughly $2 billion, crown jewels
$210 BILLION
- He was the nizam of Hyderabad, with his own mint and a massive private treasury of gold and jewels.

ALAN RUFUS 1040–93
11,000 pounds
$165–195 BILLION
- He inherited the wealth of William the Conqueror.

CORNELIUS VANDERBILT 1794–1877 *New York Central Railroad*
$100–150 million
$105–215 BILLION
- He directed the construction of New York City's Grand Central Station.

BASIL II 976–1025
300,000 pounds of gold
$169–200 BILLION
- He flourished due to the lucrative silk industry but was known for his cruelty in blinding Bulgarian prisoners.

HENRY FORD 1863–1947 *Ford Motor Company*
$100 million
$67.2–200 BILLION
- Ford more than doubled the typical wage to $5 a day.
- He was famously anti-Semitic.

JOHN JACOB ASTOR 1763–1848 *Fur Trading*
$20 million
$110–168 BILLION
- He was the first multi-millionaire in the U.S.

JEFF BEZOS 1964–Present *Amazon*
$125.8 BILLION
- The Amazon founder is currently the richest man in the world.

STEPHEN GIRARD 1750–1831
$7.5 million
$105–120 BILLION
- He personally saved the U.S. from financial collapse during the War of 1812.
- He never had children, and he gave away most of his wealth.

BILL GATES 1955–Present *Microsoft*
$96.1 BILLION
- Gates and Warren Buffet founded The Giving Pledge, a promise that they will give at least half of their wealth to philanthropy.

JASON "JAY" GOULD 1836–92 *Railroads and Real Estate*
$100 million
$78.3 BILLION
- One of the most hated men of Wall Street, Gould was accused of bribery and stock fraud.

OTHER POTENTIAL TRILLIONAIRES FROM HISTORY

EMPEROR SHENZONG OF SONG 1048–85
25–30% of global GDP
- His "New Policies" were aimed at improving the lives of peasants, a forerunner of the welfare state.

GENGIS KHAN 1162–1227
12 million square miles of land
- He had a lot of land and spoils, but it's hard to say how much personal wealth he had.

KING SOLOMON OF ISRAEL 970–31 BC
Every year, he was said to have taken 666 talents (25 tons) of gold in taxes.
- While historians are unclear about whether or not the figure existed, the wealth he amassed could've reached as much as $2 trillion in today's dollars.

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