

ABSTRACT
TRIUMPHANT PHILANTHROPISTS: INVENTING AN AMERICAN TRADITION
IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, AND THE NATION, 1844-1930

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This dissertation explores the development of American philanthropic foundations and the invention of philanthropic traditions, forms, and conventions in the United States during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. The rapid accumulation of wealth during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries posed a series of complex economic, social, and political tensions for the nation following the end of the Civil War, and the invention of the philanthropic foundation by leading businessmen sought to solve these tensions through the planned and giving for public benefit and facilitated the emergence of a new philanthropic class in the United States. The subsequent philanthropic relationship constructed by foundations formed a new kind of social contract in American life, one between the giver and the recipients of the which required acceptance of private gifts for public endeavors. This social relationship forged