



# The Richest Woman in America: Hetty Green in the Gilded Age

Janet Wallach

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No woman in the Gilded Age made as much money as Hetty Green, America's first female tycoon. A strong woman who forged her own path, she was worth at least \$100 million by the end of her life in 1916—equal to about \$2.5 billion today.

Green was mocked for her simple Quaker ways and her unfashionable frugality in an era of opulence and excess; the press even nicknamed her "The Witch of Wall Street." But those who knew her admired her wit and wisdom, and while financiers around her rose and fell as financial bubbles burst, she steadily amassed a fortune that supported businesses, churches, municipalities, and even the city of New York. Janet Wallach's engrossing biography reveals striking parallels between past financial crises and current recession woes, and speaks not only to history buffs but to today's investors, who just might learn a thing or two from Hetty Green.



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