The Deadly Upas Tree of Wall Street

PERMANENT ID:
11684

LANGUAGE:
English

DATE:
August 30, 1882

IMAGE DESCRIPTION:
The branches of a large tree form an image of railroad financier Jay Gould. Gould owned the Western Union Telegraph Company, the New York World newspaper, and several railroads including the Union Pacific Railroad. On September 24, 1869 his financial schemes led to crash of the American gold market, otherwise known as "Black Friday."

Below the tree lie the bodies of politicians and former business partners whose careers and bank accounts were destroyed due to their dealings with Gould. President Ulysses S. Grant's political reputation was damaged due to his association with Gould and the "Black Friday" scandal. He rests at the base of the tree trunk, and, in his left hand, holds a label with the inscription "Black Friday." Next to Grant, there is a body of an unknown stockholder labeled "Stockholder E.R.R" and of an unknown woman labeled "Stockholder." Alonzo Cornell holds the label "Blind pool Cornell" in his right hand.

The skull and bones of Jim Fisk are next to the body of Whitelaw Reid. Fisk was murdered in 1872 by Edward Stokes, his ex-lover's boyfriend. Stokes tried to blackmail Fisk out of a huge sum of and money, and when he wouldn't give into his demands, Stokes stabbed him. Next to Fisk, lies Theodoric Westbrook. He wears a hat with his name written across it. Roscoe Conkling lies next to a row of buildings. From the branches of the old tree hang coins and dollar signs, as well as, bribes for lawyers, legislatures, congress, editors, and judges.