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# Robert Campbell

## R. & W. Campbell

By M. Karen Hubbard

### LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will explore the concept of diversification as they explore the contributions of entrepreneur, Robert Campbell. Students will read the story of Robert Campbell and fill-in a chart with the goods and resources he supplied and the consumers who bought them.

### ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

- entrepreneur
- diversification

### RELATED CONCEPTS

- reading comprehension

### MATERIALS

- One copy of “Robert Campbell” reading for each student
- One copy of “Robert Campbell Activity” for each student
- One copy of “YOU, as an Entrepreneur” for each student

### TIME

- 45 minutes

### PROCEDURE

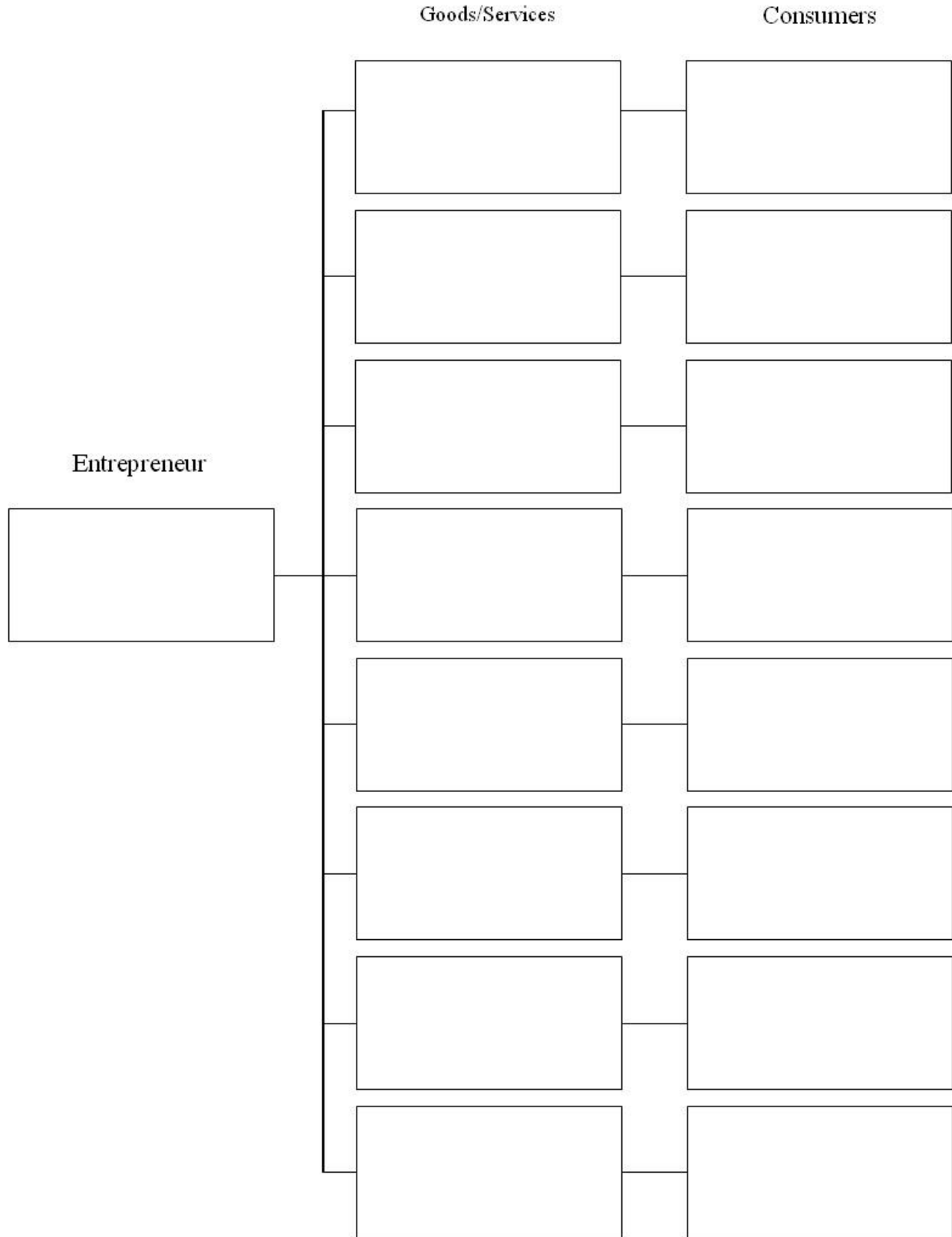
1. Explain that an “entrepreneur” is someone who thinks of a good or service that someone would like to buy and produces it. An entrepreneur takes a risk that people will not like the good or service, and that all of the time, effort, and money he or she has spent to make the product will have been for nothing.
2. Distribute the story of Robert Campbell and explain that the students are going to read about an entrepreneur who began new businesses and helped establish two cities in Missouri. Instruct students to read the story and underline the new businesses or ways he helped the cities grow.

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3. When the reading is completed, help students define any words with which they are unfamiliar. Ask the following questions:
- When and where was Robert Campbell born? (2/12/1804, Northern Ireland) Have the students locate Ireland on a map.
  - When Campbell came to America, in what two states did he live with his brother Hugh? (North Carolina and Virginia) Have students locate these states on a map.
  - What did the 'Sublette and Campbell' company do? (Traded with Indians and built many forts as trading posts)
  - Where was it located? (Rocky Mountains along the Missouri River) Have the students locate the Rocky Mountains and the Missouri River on a map.
  - What did this earn Campbell? (Good reputation as a businessman and honorable person)
  - Why is it good to have a good reputation as a businessperson? (Consumers are more likely to do business with you which will lead to becoming a successful businessperson.)
  - What did Campbell and Sublette open in St. Louis? (Wholesale and retail dry goods business)
  - Why did Robert and Sublette end their partnership? (As entrepreneurs, they took a chance that people would not buy their products and so they would not make much of an income which happened in this case.)
  - Why did Campbell open the 'R. Campbell and Company' and what did it sell? (The economy got better and the company sold dry goods and Indian goods.)
  - Where was the 'R. Campbell and Company' opened? (St. Louis, Missouri) Have students locate St. Louis on a map.
  - To whom did Campbell sell the goods? (Sold to people going West and new stores opening in the frontier.)
  - What other business did Campbell earn a good amount of money? (Real estate investments – bought land or buildings)
  - What city did he help create with his real estate investment? (Kansas City, Missouri)
  - Why did Campbell buy steamboats? (Campbell sent his goods upriver to sell out west, and to bring the western goods down to St. Louis. His boats also carried passengers and goods between St. Louis and New Orleans on the Mississippi River.)
  - What famous author was a riverboat pilot on Campbell's steamboat? (Mark Twain) Do you know any books by this author? (The Story of Tom Sawyer, The Story of Huckleberry Finn)
  - What are three other businesses Campbell had investments in? (Paid people to take cattle from the southern plains to the trains, owned gold mines in New Mexico, owned largest hotel in St. Louis)
  - What other city, besides Kansas City, did he help build the economic base? (St. Louis, Missouri)

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4. Explain to the students that one way to make sure an entrepreneur still makes an income is by 'diversification' – the reduction of risk is achieved by having many unrelated companies instead of one company, so, if one company loses money and goes out of business, the entrepreneur has other companies to keep bringing in income.
  5. Distribute the “Robert Campbell Activity” sheet to the students. Instruct the students to look over the reading again and find nine consumers to whom Campbell sold goods/services. (The reading did not state that he started the banks, it states that he was the president so this is not included.) When students are finished, discuss the activity sheet with them.
  6. Distribute “YOU, as an Entrepreneur” activity sheet and have the students think about the skills they need to start a business and the consumers for whom they could provide goods and services. Have the students put their name in the rectangle marked “Entrepreneur”. Then ask the students to list the skills they have and the business they could start using those skills. Finally, ask them to write the person who would purchase the good/service in the “Consumer” rectangle.
  7. As a culminating activity after the students are finished, have them tell the skill they listed, the good/service they could produce and the consumer who they hope would buy it. Then, ask the class if they can think of any other product the student could produce with that skill and a different consumer who would purchase it.

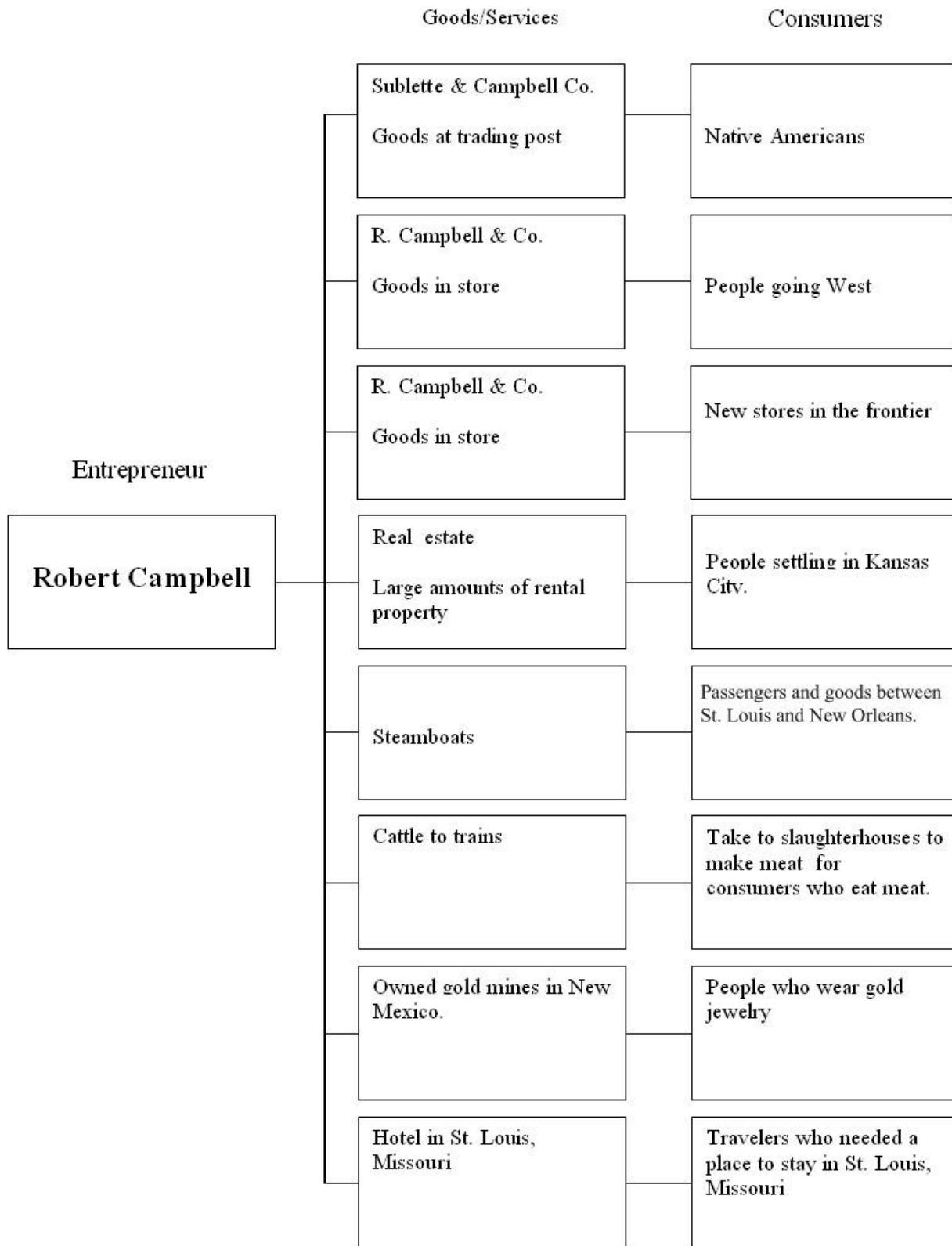
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### Robert Campbell Activity



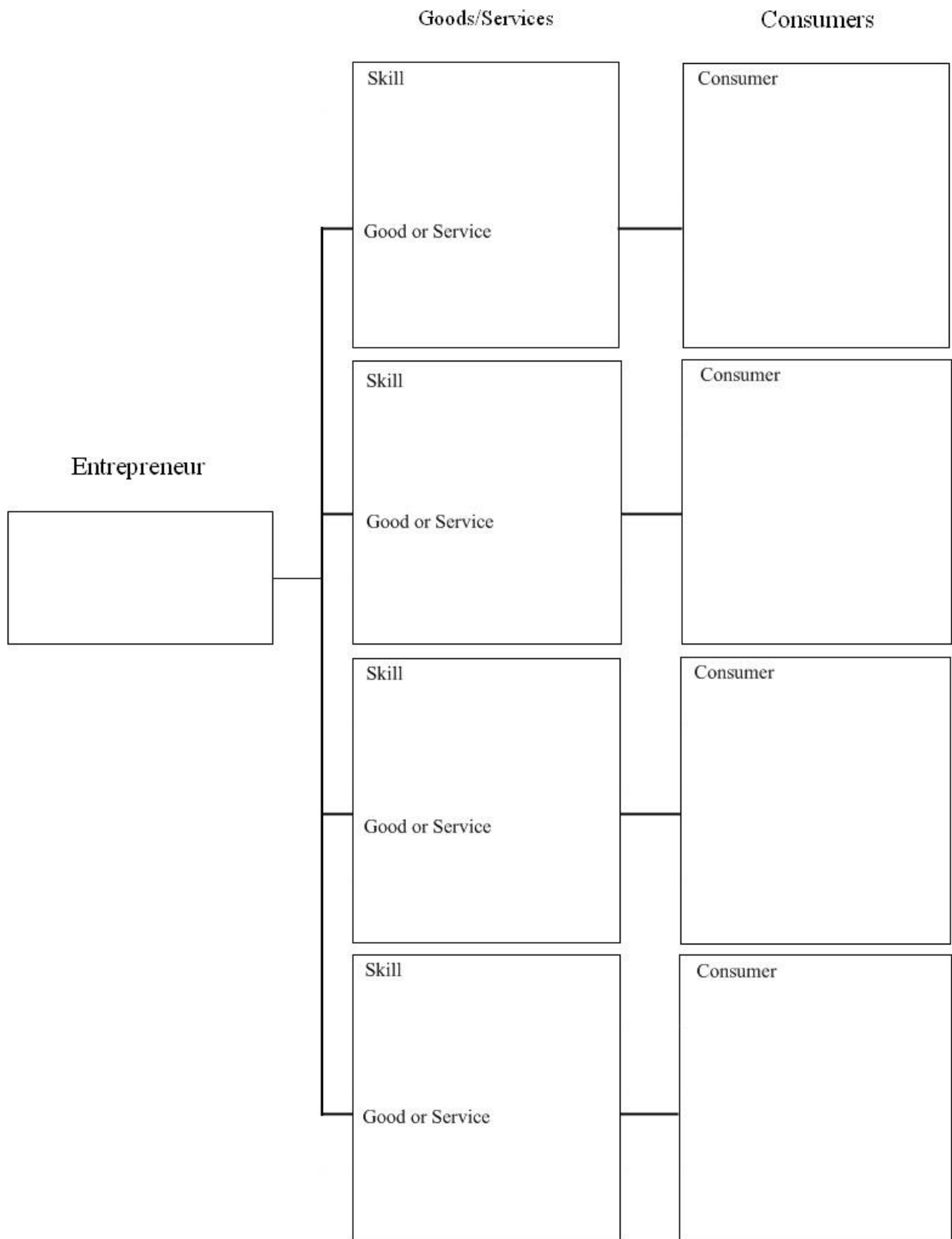
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## Robert Campbell Activity (suggested answers)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### YOU, as an Entrepreneur



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# Robert Campbell R. & W. Campbell

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Robert Campbell was born on February 12, 1804 in Plumbridge, County Tyrone in present day Northern Ireland. He was the youngest child of his father's second marriage. This meant he would inherit very little or no property. It is felt this factor led to Robert's decision to follow his older brother, Hugh, to America to seek a better life.

In August 1822, Campbell sailed from Ireland to America. He stayed with his brother in North Carolina and then Virginia. The climate in these two states was bad for his health so he moved west where the air was better for his lungs. He settled in St. Louis where his career was progressing well, but his health was not. A doctor advised him to go to the Rocky Mountains. Robert spent much of the next ten years living and working in the west for many different partnerships and fur companies. In 1832 he partnered with William Sublette to form Sublette and Campbell. The company traded with Indians along the Missouri and built many forts as trading posts. His fur trading business earned him a good reputation and was the stepping stone to becoming a successful businessman.

Campbell and Sublette opened a wholesale and retail dry goods business in St. Louis in September 1836. It was located at 7 North Main Street where the St. Louis Arch grounds are located today. In 1842, Robert and Sublette were not selling as many goods as they needed to keep their store open, so they ended their partnership. Robert bought the goods and furnishings from Sublette.

When the economy got better, Campbell opened the 'R. Campbell and Company' which sold dry goods and Indian goods. His business got better in 1848 and at this time, a relative, William Campbell, became a junior partner. The company was named 'R. & W. Campbell'. They supplied people going West with goods they would need for the trip. They also sent goods to new stores which were opening in the frontier. By 1843, Robert's reputation as an excellent businessman was recognized by people in the community and he was named president of the Merchants National Bank and the First Bank of Missouri.

In addition to the supply company and banks, Robert earned a good amount of money in his real estate investments. In the early 1840's, he developed large amounts of rental property and was one of the people responsible for the creation of Kansas City, Missouri. He later sold his Kansas City property to his nephew, John Campbell.

Robert Campbell and Virginia Jane Kyle were married on February 25, 1841. She played a key role in Campbell's business and social life. Between 1842 and

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1864, they had 13 children. However, ten of their children died from disease and health problems.

Campbell saw how important steamboats were to the transportation of goods up and down the river. In the 1840's, he bought steamboats and began to send his goods upriver to sell and bring the western goods, such as buffalo hides, down to St. Louis. His steamboats also carried passengers and goods between St. Louis and New Orleans on the Mississippi River. (The first job of author Mark Twain was as a riverboat pilot on Mr. Campbell's steamboat, 'A. B. Chambers', in 1859.)

Campbell played a key role in raising funds and troops for the United States war with Mexico. He also supplied goods and transportation to the Union army in the Mississippi valley during the Civil War.

As Campbell grew older, his investments in different businesses continued. By 1860's/70's, he paid people to take cattle from the pastures in the southern plains to the trains for transport to the slaughter house. He also owned goldmines in New Mexico as well as the largest hotel in St. Louis, the Southern Hotel, which burned down in 1877.

Robert Campbell died at home on October 10, 1879. When he died, he was thought to be one of the wealthiest men in Missouri, leaving an estate of \$2 million (worth \$35 million today) in cash alone. Today Campbell's home is a museum in St. Louis. Campbell's biography is one of an Irishman who came to America to make his fortune, and in doing so, helped to build the economic base of St. Louis and Kansas City.