

Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr Study Guide

**Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr by Ron
Chernow**

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Plot Summary

Titan by Ron Chernow is the life story of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. The man who became the first American billionaire, and built the Standard Oil trust. The well researched book is fascinating reading and very informative showing how the trust came into being and how fortunes were made during the era of the robber barons.

The wealthy scion came from humble beginnings in upstate New York. The father he rarely talked about, William Avery Rockefeller, was a flim-flam man traveling around the country peddling medicines and other wares. His mother, Eliza, was religious and quite smitten with Big Bill. He left them for months at a time, leaving Eliza to take care of the family and take care of the farm. The family eventually moved to the Cleveland area. When John was in his last year of high school, Big Bill gave John money and told him to build a house for Eliza and the family, and then departed. John later received a letter from him saying he had married another woman. John did not want to be dependent on his father in any way and spent most of his life trying to hide the fact that his father was a bigamist. Quitting high school, he completed a course at a commercial college and soon had a job as an assistant bookkeeper. Two years later he was promoted to chief bookkeeper and within a year left to open his own commodity commission house with partners Clark and Gardner. One day a man walked in with a product he developed called kerosene. Rockefeller became a partner and this was the beginning of his oil business.

The business grew quickly as the economy began a boom period after the Civil War. The industry, like many others, was plagued with overproduction and falling prices. Rockefeller dealt with this problem as he was always to deal with it. He bought out his competitors, even his original partners. As he became wealthy, he formed the Standard Oil Company in Cleveland, which began to buy out its competitors where ever it could. To circumvent the Ohio laws of incorporation, a holding company was formed to hold the out of state properties. This eventually developed into the trust that was dissolved in 1911, making John D. Rockefeller the richest man in the world.

John D. Rockefeller and his wife Cettie were strict Baptists and maintained a strict household where every bill was checked and the children performed chores for their money. Their lifestyle did no reveal the amount of wealth their father had amassed. John D. believed that he brought his religious principles to the business world but he was viewed by many as ruthless and unscrupulous and his company was referred to as an octopus.

Rockefeller believed that God gave people wealth so they could use that wealth for the betterment of mankind. As a child, he was raised to make donations to the church and he went on to become the world's biggest philanthropist. His son was instilled with the same beliefs and spent his life managing the philanthropy.

This book provides a fascinating look at John D. Rockefeller and this exciting period in our history. The reader will appreciate the depth of Chernow's research and his writing

style. The biography reads more like a novel and the reader will find it hard to put the book down. The book is well worth reading.



Chapters 1-2

Chapters 1-2 Summary and Analysis

When in his seventies John D. Rockefeller is interviewed by William O. Inglis over a three year period, at the request of his son, who wants to clear the family name over what has been reported previously.

Chapter 1 traces the name of Rockefeller to Europe and in 1723 Johann Peter Rockefeller immigrates to America and settles in New Jersey. Descendants Godfrey and Lucy immigrate to sparsely settled territory around Ithaca, New York in the 1830s. They have a son, William Avery Rockefeller who is born in Granger, New York in 1810. The family ekes out a living off of their seventy acres of land.

William Avery Rockefeller leads the life of a vagabond in his younger years. He disappears for months at a time and is involved in numerous schemes. He does not accompany his family to Richford when they move and does not appear in the area until 1835, posing as a blind and deaf peddler. He eventually marries Eliza Davison in 1837. Her father is considered to be a rich man because his farm is paid off and he has a little money. Big Bill married Eliza for the money and they settle into a house one half mile from his parents' home. He brings his former housekeeper and mistress, Nancy Brown, to live with them and has children with both women. Bill eventually sends Nancy and her two daughters to live with her parents and she eventually marries another man.

After a few years in Richford, Big Bill begins to resume his old life, disappearing for long periods of time. The townspeople in Richford begin to refer to him as Devil Bill. When John D. is three, his family moves to Moravia.

Chapter Two concerns the Rockefeller life in Moravia where they live on ninety acres on one of the Finger Lakes, Owasco Lake. Big Bill runs a logging business and a hired worker who runs his farm.

John D. attends the local one room school where he is a good student. He is calculating and plans out his moves before he acts in everything that he does. John D. is involved with the church. His mother encourages him and his siblings to contribute their own pennies to the church and John D. considers this as the basis for his philanthropy later in life. His father begins training him in business at an early age. He always acknowledges contracts and promptly pays his bills.

The family moves to Owego in 1850. John D. is responsible for many household functions since Eliza relies on him in the absence of his father. John and brother William begin attending the Owego Academy in 1852.



Chapter 3-4

Chapter 3-4 Summary and Analysis

In 1853, Bill moves the family to Strongsville, Ohio and leaves them at the home of his sister and brother-in-law. Eventually, they move to a farm. Bill works as a traveling medicine man selling cancer cures. He is known as Doc Rockefeller. The boys are enrolled in school and eventually the family moves to Cleveland in the mid 1830s and then to a farm in Parma. Bill continues his wanderings and becomes a bigamist when he marries Margaret Allen in 1855. This ends John D.'s plans to attend college. He quits school and takes a three month course at a commercial college at the age of sixteen. In August of 1855, he begins looking for employment so he does not have to depend on his father. He is eventually hired by Hewitt and Tuttle as an assistant bookkeeper.

John D. receives a good introduction to the business world at Hewitt and Tuttle. He learns a great deal about the transportation industry. John D. begins keeping track of his other expenditures and receipts in a book he calls Ledger A. He also records his philanthropy. At this time, his friends come from the community at the Baptist church where he is very active in church activities.

Bill returns to Cleveland and gives John D. the money to build a house for Eliza and the family. Bill then returns to Margaret in Philadelphia.

At the age of seventeen he becomes chief bookkeeper and begins to trade for his own account. In 1855, he and Maurice B. Clark open their own business, which is the subject of Chapter Four. George W. Garner joins the firm a year later. John D. is able to secure business loans because of his reputation at the Baptist church. His commodity business is very successful during the Civil War. He does not have to serve in the war because he is the sole source of support for his family. He hires a substitute to serve for him.

John. D. becomes rich during the Civil War and in 1862 forces Gardner out of the firm.



Chapters 5-6

Chapters 5-6 Summary and Analysis

In the 1850s, whale oil is used to fuel lighting and there is a shortage of the product. At this time, there is oil in Pennsylvania, discovered by the Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company. In 1860, the first kerosene is made in Cleveland by C. A. Dean. Looking for financial backing, he finds it from Clark and Rockefeller and in 1863. They form the refining business, Andrews, Clark and Co. John D. is now in the oil business. Within a year, this becomes the most profitable part of the business.

Maurice Clark and his brothers are in business with John D. in the refinery and John D. does not like this because they have the votes to override him. They dissolve their partnership on February 1865 and agree to auction the firm to the highest bidder. John D. now has control of the largest oil refinery in Cleveland at the age of twenty-five along with his new partner, Am Andrews.

In 1864, John D. marries Laura Celestia Spelman, called Cettie. He meets her nine years earlier in high school. They have a month long honeymoon in Canada and along the East Coast. They live with Eliza for the first six months of their marriage and then move into their own house nearby.

Chapter Six begins with the post civil War period and how there are fortunes to be made at this time. Economic development is accelerated as a result of the war and there are rapid advances in technology and industrialization. This is the time when John D. begins building his fortune. The kerosene business booms. Petroleum products are also being used in industry. John D. and Andrews open a second refinery with John's brother William in charge. Unlike some other oil men, John D. feels that oil will be the basis of a coming economic revolutions.

Brother William sets up a firm for them, called Rockefeller and Company in New York City in 1866 to handle exports to Europe. Part of William's job is to help secure financing. At this time many bankers view the oil industry as a form of speculation and are reluctant to extend loans, but John D. has a reputation for prompt payment and is known to be honest. Henry Morrison Flagler becomes one of his closest associates at this time and also one of his best friends. They are alike in that they both exercised considerable self-discipline.

John D. likes Cleveland because it is a transportation hub. He is able to negotiate some good deals with Jay Gould and the other railroads.



Chapter 7-8

Chapter 7-8 Summary and Analysis

In August 1868, John D. moves his family to a house on Euclid Avenue in an area that is called millionaires' row. John D. and Cettie keep their circle of friends from business, family and church and never go to clubs. He structures his schedule so he naps after meals and receives enough exercise. He likes to work in his garden. John D. paces himself to improve his productivity. The Rockefeller have four children who survive: Bessie, Alta, Edith and John, Jr. and John D. likes to spend as much time with them as he can. The children are overly protected and educated at home. They rarely go out and have to earn their spending money by performing chores and are not aware of their father's wealth until they are adults. John, Jr. wears his sisters' hand-me-downs dresses until he is eight years old. The children are taught not to be wasteful and to exercise restraint. Both of the parents are thrifty.

Chapter Eight begins with a discussion of the economic situation in the later part of the nineteenth century. There are periodic booms and busts. The price of crude oil is extremely volatile. The results are cartels and other market arrangements. By 1870, there is so much overproduction and falling prices that John D. begins to worry about his wealth: John D. studies the situation and becomes convinced that the only way for the industry to survive is through cooperation and collusion, not through competition. Associations are being formed to limit production.

In 1870, the partnership of Rockefeller, Andrews and Flagler is dissolved and Standard Oil Company (Ohio) is formed. John D. is the largest stockholder. He soon begins to buy out the weaker firms. John D. is able to negotiate good rates on the railroads because many of the railroad owners are Standard Oil stockholders. They form the first holding company, the South Improvement Company (SIC). The teams are very favorable to Standard Oil, which guarantees each of the three railroads a specified percentage of business for which it will receive rebates. This arrangement is called a conspiracy and John D. tries to distance himself from the scheme. There is an uproar over the doubling of freight rates to non-members and John D.'s name is bandied about in the press and receives a lot of bad publicity.

In 1871, John D. buys out Clark, Payne and Company making the world's largest oil producer. Payne goes to work for Standard Oil although Clark is not welcome. This was one of his twenty-two takeovers according to the SIC. He tells those whom he bought out to take Standard Oil stock and they will never regret it. Rockefeller is motivated by trying to control the effect of overproduction and the business cycle on prices and profits. He does not want to be found out of business either.



Chapter 9-10

Chapter 9-10 Summary and Analysis

Rockefeller's Cleveland refineries are further from the East Coast than the Oil Regions refineries are. As such, they face higher transportation costs. After the end of the SIC, Rockefeller comes up with a new plan, called the Pittsburgh Plan. This is to be a cartel headed by John D. that will limit production and negotiate favorable rates with the railroads. The refiners fight the plan and many will not adhere to their quotas until John D. dissolves it in 1873. The Pennsylvania producers form their own plan and end up burning the wells and destroying the equipment of non-cooperating members. Cartels always have problems try to enforce production limits.

In 1873 the economy enters into a downturn that lasts for six years. There are bank failures and railroad bankruptcies. Oil prices tumble and Rockefeller absorbs another group of failing competitors. They have to do this secretly because the existing law does not allow Standard Oil to own property outside of Ohio. John D. is also very concerned with displaying wealth. Rockefeller now sets a goal of absorbing the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia refiners into Standard Oil and he easily succeeds in absorbing the two largest refiners. Within two years he has absorbed almost all of them.

At this time, John D. is also buying the New York refineries through his brother William. He also begins to buy some of the companies in the oil Regions. Many of his rivals are now a part of Standard Oil. This includes John D. Archbold who becomes one of Rockefeller's most trusted associates. Archbold absorbs many of the Oil Creek companies through Acme Oil Company, a Standard Oil front set up for this purpose. It takes Archbold three or four years to accomplish this goal. By May 1875, Rockefeller controls all the major refineries in the nation and few people outside of the oil industry have ever heard of him.

Standard Oil then becomes more involved in the railroad business and begins to lease them oil tank cars in 1874. This does away with the transportation advantages of the East Coast and the results are uniform shipping rates. Standard Oil and others also began to build pipelines in 1874.

Chapter 10 begins with the company's move to a new headquarters building in Cleveland and this chapter looks at Rockefeller the employer. He pays his people an above market wage, is concerned about them, and always acts with propriety and provides benefits for employees before it is fashionable. He is always concerned with efficiency and cost saving measures.



Chapter 11-13

Chapter 11-13 Summary and Analysis

The Rockefellers are not practitioners of conspicuous consumption. Their homes are practical and comfortable. Their Forest Hills home is once a hotel. Over the 1877 to 1883 period, they gradually shift their residence from Euclid Avenue to Forest Hill. They maintain both residences after their move to New York in 1883.

The Rockefellers continue to attend the same Baptist church, driving there each Sunday. Religion helps John D. in his business life. They remain active in the prayer meetings and Sunday school. John D. preaches temperance to his workers, having little use for those who use alcohol. Big Bill continues to visit once or twice a year and John D. tolerates the visits for the children's sake.

Chapter Twelve begins with new oil discoveries in Pennsylvania in 1875. By this time, Rockefeller operates entirely through agents. The new oil at Bradford intensifies the battle between Standard Oil and the oil producers. The Bradford producers are pumping so much oil, that Standard Oil refuses to store it. They pay less than market price per barrel and give highest priority to pipeline flows to their own refineries. The producers need Rockefeller's United Pipe Lines system for their own survival. Add to this Rockefeller's problems with the Pennsylvania railroad, and the result is violence that requires federal troops to quell it. This results in Rockefeller buying Empire and heading a new pooling arrangement.

Rockefeller continues to buy out his competitors and manages to control those in transport. The last pocket of resistance lies with the Baltimore and West Virginia refiners and they are brought into the fold by 1877. Rockefeller now controls ninety percent of the U.S. oil that is refined. When Rockefeller fights rival pipeline companies, he begins to run into opposition from the government and the public. He cannot stop the Tidewater pipeline from opening, but eventually subdues the opposition.

In the spring of 1879, a grand jury in Pennsylvania delivers indictments against Rockefeller, Flagler and other Standard executives. They eventually work out a deal and the additional cases are scuttled.

Chapter Thirteen opens with John D. in his forties. He describes himself as almost semi-retired in 1878, spending many afternoons at his estate rather than his office. The Rockefellers begin to spend more time in New York. They make the move to New York in 1884, buying a brownstone mansion on West Fifty-Fourth Street. The company's headquarters also move and most of the executives buy homes in the same area as Rockefeller. The company builds a new headquarters at 26 Broadway.

Standard Oil circumvents the state incorporation laws by having trustees hold the stock in out of state properties. These trustees technically own the properties, not Standard

Oil. In 1882, they form Standard Oil Companies in the states where the trustees live, New York and New Jersey. They are part of a trust with Rockefeller holding one third of the trust certificates. This practice is duplicated by other industries leading to the enactment of the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890.

The Rockefellers travel around the United States and in 1887 make their first trip abroad to Europe. They continue their philanthropic activities, allowing the children to decide on the disbursements.



Chapters 14-16

Chapters 14-16 Summary and Analysis

By the middle of 1880, more than seventy percent of American oil is shipped abroad. Oil is the fourth largest export of the United States with the major competition being Russia, and it is cheaper to produce oil in Russia than it is in America. The Russian operation is owned by the Nobel Brothers. The Rothschilds also enter the oil business on the Caspian and Black Seas and oil is found in different parts of the world.

Rockefeller begins to integrate vertically to insure high volume and low costs. They use the same coercive tactics in vertical integration as they used in horizontal integration. The country is expanding to the west and new oil companies are forming, and the Standard trust divides the continent into eleven marketing districts. Rockefeller develops an extensive intelligence network.

In 1878 Thomas Edison invents the light bulb and soon electrical lighting becomes available but it takes time to build the needed electric generating plants so the kerosene market is not affected immediately. Standard Oil is also developing its natural gas business at this time and in 1886 establishes the Natural Gas Trust.

Chapter Fifteen reveals that Big Bill is close to his son Frank who often opposes John in various business deals. John D. does not want it known that his father is a bigamist. When he helps Big Bill buy a North Dakota ranch, he does it in such a way that Margaret Allen can never have any claims to it. It is only when Big Bill is injured and thinks he is dying that he tells a friend to notify John D. After he recovers, he finds it difficult to resume the charade.

When Eliza dies in March 1889, John has it announced that she died a widow, in spite of the fact that Big Bill is still alive. John D. is angry at Big Bill for not attending the funeral in Cleveland. Relations between John D., William and Big Bill remain tense. Frank envies the wealth of his two brothers. He has a ranch in Kansas.

Chapter Sixteen begins with oil being found in the Western United States, as well as in Indiana and Ohio. The success of the Lima fields causes another buying binge by Standard as the holding of the trust grows. The only competition to Standard is the Sun Oil Company. Public sentiment against monopolies begins to grow. Reform is expected on the national level and John D. is beginning to dodge process servers. The Sherman Antitrust legislation is introduced in Congress by Senator John Sherman of Ohio in December 1889. It is signed into law on July 23, 1890.



Chapters 17-18

Chapters 17-18 Summary and Analysis

Rockefeller is continually besieged with requests for money, many from people who want money for personal use. He eventually devises a method of philanthropy that is in keeping with his fortune. Reverend Augustus H. Strong wants Rockefeller to finance a Baptist university in New York, but John D. does not favor the idea, even after his daughter Bessie marries Strong's son, Charles in March 1889.

John D. is very impressed with William Rainey Harper, whom he meets while visiting Bessie at Vassar. He agrees to Harper's plan to establish a university in Chicago. Rockefeller is impressed with Andrew Carnegie's comment that a man who dies rich is disgraced. Marshall Field donates a ten acre plot to the University of Chicago. The Morgan Theological Seminary is transferred to the new university and Harper is its president. It opens on October 1, 1892.

By 1891, John D. is grooming Flagler as his successor and is gradually shifting responsibilities to him. Frederick T. Gates, who negotiates the Chicago deal, goes to work for Rockefeller ABES which handles his philanthropy. Rockefeller spends eight months resting at Forest Hills under orders from his doctor. He returns to work at 26 Broadway until 1897.

Chapter Eighteen begins with the Ohio Attorney General reading a book about trusts which includes a copy of Standard Oil's trust deed indicating that control of the Ohio company has been transferred out of state, in violation of its Ohio charter. He files in 1890 asking for dissolution. He wins his case in the Ohio Supreme Court and Standard's lawyer, Samuel Dodd announces that the trust will be dissolved. The trust certificates will be exchanged for show. Basically, things remain the same. The trust basically reorganizes to satisfy the courts.

The nation suffers the most severe depression ever in June 1893. There are railroad and bank failures and massive unemployment. Standard Oil and the other trusts remain healthy. During this period, the automobile is invented by Henry Ford. There is more opposition to Standard Oil as the Pure Oil Company is formed by a group of independents.

Rockefeller grows closer to retirement in 1895 at the age of fifty-six. He is beginning to have health problems and stops appearing at 26 Broadway in 1897, even though he never publicly announces his retirement.



Chapter 19-21

Chapter 19-21 Summary and Analysis

Junior enters Brown University in 1893 and becomes interested in corporate reform. He meets Abby Aldrich near the end of his sophomore year and begins his career at 26 Broadway in 1897 working with Gates in philanthropy. On October 9, 1901 Junior marries Abby.

Chapter Twenty discusses the investments of John D. Gates, who begins his career as a minister, is John D.'s chief philanthropic adviser. He also handles John D.'s outside investments. At this time a group known as the Standard Oil Crowd is active on Wall Street and consists of Henry H. Rogers, James Stillman and William Rockefeller. Unlike John D., William is active in stock market trading.

The Rockefellers acquire the Equitable Trust Bank which handles most of the trust companies. It eventually merged with Chase Bank becoming the center of the Rockefeller family finances. William is involved with National City Bank. In 1907, John D. buys Rogers shares of Standard Oil stock. Rockefeller also becomes involved in the iron ore industry under Gates along with fleets on the Great Lakes as well as mining ventures in Colorado.

The trusts continue to grow through the 1890s and now trusts are formed. When J. P. Morgan decides to form a steel trust in 1900, he has to deal with Rockefeller because of his iron holdings. The two men do not like one another and Junior handles the negotiations with Morgan. The resulting U.S. Steel trust is larger than the Standard Oil trust and makes John D. the second richest man in the United States. The Rockefellers liquidate their U.S. Steel holding by 1911.

In Chapter Twenty One, Rockefeller's wealth continues to grow. He becomes active in sports like bicycling and golf. He buys land at Pocantico Hills for his house in 1893. The estate is eventually expanded to three thousand acres. Since both he and Cettie like golf, he has golf courses designed for both Pocantico and Forest Hills and they play in all kinds of weather but they both have health problems, as does daughter Bessie Strong. Edith also suffers from nervous problems but marries Harold McCormick in 1895, and becomes a Chicago socialite. The children are kept on allowance with Junior overseeing their finances.



Chapters 22-23

Chapters 22-23 Summary and Analysis

By the mid-1890s, public sentiment is to curtail the trusts. In 1897, the Ohio Attorney General finds that the trust is still in force and the certificates cannot be redeemed for show. He feels the Ohio company is in contempt of court. During the proceedings, Archbold engages in a shouting match with Flagg, an assistant to Attorney General Menett. Standard Oil has burned some records that have been requested by the court.

A change in New Jersey law legalizes holding companies. There are numerous oil finds in various parts of the country and new oil companies come into existence. After the assassination of McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt becomes President. Roosevelt says that Standard Oil is an example of a bad trust. In 1902, he brings an antitrust suit against Northern Securities Company, a holding company of J. P. Morgan.

The Elkins Act is passed in 1903 with penalties for railroad rebates. He has plans for a new cabinet department that will have a Bureau of Corporations which can investigate the trusts. Standard Oil is against this bureau. Ida Tarbell is publishing her scathing expose of Standard Oil at this time and even Roosevelt is reading it. Even Frank Rockefeller volunteers as a source, venting about how his brother has ruined his life. Standard Oil remains silent throughout the series and John D. does not sue for libel. The series results in a massive hunt for Big Bill once Tarbell's staff finds that he is still alive.

Chapter Twenty Three reveals that John D. is devoting more time to philanthropy. He believes that his fortune is a gift from God to be used in the betterment of mankind. Critics claim that the philanthropy is a trick to offset the effect of the investigations. He donates heavily to education and medical research and endows the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in New York.

Chapters 24-25

Chapters 24-25 Summary and Analysis

In April 1901 a train full of millionaires, dubbed the Millionaire's Special, including Junior, tours the South, touring black colleges, most of which have been financed with money from the North. After a sheltered childhood, Junior craves involvement in helping social problems. The Rockefellers fund the Spelman Seminary in Atlanta. As a result of this trip, Rockefeller funds the General Education board which receives a perpetual federal charter for the promotion of education regardless of race, sex or creed. Junior is in charge of the project. Their first goals are to establish high schools. Its method is to stimulate public opinion and government action. There are eight hundred new black Southern high schools by 1910 as a result of the efforts of the GEB.

Another Rockefeller program in the South is to eradicate hookworm. There is also funding for medical schools who meet their standards, and John D. continues to single-handed support the University of Chicago until 1910. The media response to the Rockefeller philanthropy is that he is trying to buy a good reputation.

Chapter Twenty Five begins with the fact that Rockefeller's business reputation outweighs his philanthropy. By 1905 there are so many threats that he fences in his properties, closing them to the public. He hires Pinkerton detectives for security. In his sixties, he begins to attend performances of the philharmonic and opera, as well as the theater. He remains thrifty, continually checking bills and household accounts.

As Senior becomes more reclusive, the limelight shifts to Junior and focuses on the wealth he will inherit. He does not like the limelight and is very sensitive to criticism of his father. Junior is becoming more involved with the business side of Standard Oil under Archbold and does not like their business tactics and begins to distance himself from the business side. He suffers a nervous breakdown in 1904 as he gropes to reconcile the abusive business tactics with ethics. He is also not ostentatious and decides he will not waste his money. His father begins transferring some token assets in 1903 with gifts of shares of Standard Oil stock, as he does to his daughters.



Chapters 26-28

Chapters 26-28 Summary and Analysis

The Bureau of Corporations begins its investigation of Standard Oil. In 1905, the House or Representatives requests an investigation of the company. Standard Oil is the kind of trust that Roosevelt wants to bust. The rough shod tactics of Archbold mean that antitrust action cannot be negotiated or avoided. There are a variety of suits at the state level before the federal suit is filed. Senior remains in seclusion at Poncaticco, avoiding the process servers.

In 1903, Junior begins asking his father to publish an authorized biography to repair the damage done by Tarbell. Various projects are started by not completed. John D., Cettie and other family members travel to Europe in June 1906 and his lawyers tell him to extend his stay because of the various lawsuits. They return in July. At this time, Rockefeller becomes more interested in public relations and in 1908 consents to his memoirs being published in installments by Doubleday.

In Chapter Twenty Seven, the federal antitrust suit is filed in Missouri on November 18, 1906. Its goal is the dissolution of the Standard Oil trust with each of its companies becoming independent. The trust faces legal problems in various states. Senior wants to formally resign but Archbold will not accept his resignation.

The great trust begins to lose its legal battles. Their Indiana company receives a \$29.4 million fine. An appellate court eventually throws out the fine and orders a retrial. The news of the fine causes a stock market slump and bank panics.

Archbold, deciding they need representation in Congress, begins sending money to certain Congressional members. His prior dealings with members of Congress are reported in the press. He survives as head of the combine. Junior resigns in 1910, preferring to devote his efforts to philanthropy.

The government wins its antitrust case against Standard oil of New Jersey which is ordered to divest itself of its subsidiaries. The Supreme Court upholds the verdict on May 15, 1911, giving the trust six months to divest. The divestiture makes Rockefeller even richer with one third of the stock in all the companies that are spun off. The stock prices of all these companies soar.

In Chapter Twenty Eight, Rockefeller, now the world's richest man, enjoys his motor cars. In 1909, he establishes the Rockefeller Foundation with an initial endowment of one hundred million dollars. Gates resigns his position on the business side in 1912, remaining involved with the philanthropies.



Chapters 29-31

Chapters 29-31 Summary and Analysis

Junior separates himself from all businesses but one, his mining business in Colorado. His father purchases the Colorado Fuel and Iron company in 1902 and Junior wants to try to make it profitable. An explosion occurs on January 31, 1910. Rockefeller has always opposed labor unions and this policy is carried out at CFI, which is being run by La Mont Montgomery Bowers, a relative of Gates and there are labor problems at the firm. Union organizers are trying to form a union and the companies bring in armed guards. During a strike, the miners are evicted from their company homes and live in tents near Ludlow.

Violence erupts at the tent city. Some strikers are killed along with women and children. The event becomes known as the Ludlow Massacre. Crowds blame Junior and Senior, and there are demonstrations around them. When Junior will not budge on the issue of the open shop, federal troops are sent to Colorado. During testimony about the incident, Junior claims he had no knowledge of the situation in Colorado. He remains anti-union, favoring an open shop even after he travels to Colorado. Even though Junior is shaken by the Ludlow affair, he emerges stronger and more confident in himself.

Chapter Thirty opens with the death of Cettie on March 12, 1915. Due to Cettie's illness, John D. is in Cleveland longer than he should be and faces a \$1.5 million tax bill for being an Ohio resident. The family has to slip into Ohio secretly to bury Cettie in the family plot. John D. creates the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial with an endowment of \$74 in her honor.

After Cettie's death, her sister Lute functions as his hostess. John D. spends most of his time at his Lakewood golf retreat in New Jersey or his home in Florida. He infrequently sees his daughters. He also takes golf vacations to Augusta, Georgia. He begins to relax and form some friendships. John D. poses for portraits and sculptures of himself.

John D. consents to the three years of interviews and the biography by William O. Inglis because his son knows very little about the events at Standard Oil. What he knows, he learns from Tarbell. He wants his son to know the facts, Inglis completes the book in 1924.



Chapter 32-33

Chapter 32-33 Summary and Analysis

Junior maintains a good relationship with his father and Senior is always happy to see him. Junior begins to collect works of art. He asks Senior for the money, and he eventually gives it to him. Senior begins transferring his wealth to Junior in 1917 due to a change in the inheritance tax. He transfers \$475 million to his children between 1917 and 1922 with most of it going to Junior. Trust funds of \$12 million each were established for Edith and Alta.

John and Abby buy a new house and begin to spend their summers at Mount Desert Island in Maine, eventually buying a house in Seal Harbor. Abby enjoys spending time with her children just as Senior did. He is good with his grandchildren and they enjoy him. Junior goes to great lengths to keep the children's pictures out of the newspapers. They dine with Senior every Sunday. Junior follows many of the practices of his father, like making them keep accounts so they will know the value of money.

Chapter Thirty Three opens with the death of Frank in April 1917. John D. and William travel to upstate New York to visit their boyhood homes. In 1922, William dies of pneumonia. John D. is now in his eighties and has a goal to live to one hundred. He is now more open to strangers and socializing and mellows with age.

Junior is burdened by the weight of the Rockefeller fortune and suffers from stress. He manages the philanthropy and is involved in various projects like the Riverside Church in Morningside Heights. Junior is also interested in preserving the wilderness and buys land in Wyoming to donate to the National Park Service. He does this in other states also. Abby and Junior are also active in funding the arts.

Chapter 34-35

Chapter 34-35 Summary and Analysis

Senior worries about the welfare of his grandchildren. He does not always agree with the choices they make. He feels they are prey to fortune seekers and, at Edith's requests, stops making annual gifts to them. They bring their own children to visit Senior. Bessie's daughter receives \$10 million from Senior when he dies.

Junior's six children are subject to his strict discipline, but daughter Babs rebels and is a product of the Roaring Twenties, complete with cigarettes and bootleg liquor. John III feels he can never live up to his father's expectations. He enters the family business after graduation from Princeton. Nelson is the publicity seeker of the family. He graduates from Princeton and then goes to work at 26 Broadway. Eventually, he enters politics. Laurence attends Princeton and then Harvard Law School. He inherits his grandfather's seat on the New York Stock Exchange. He is interested in aviation and establishes a company of vacation resorts. Winthrop attends Yale and then works for Humble Oil in the Texas oilfields. He eventually becomes the governor of Arkansas. David, the youngest, attends Harvard and receives a PhD in economics from the University of Chicago. He eventually becomes chairman of the Chase Manhattan bank.

In Chapter Thirty Five, John D. is in his nineties. He enjoys playing the stock market in the 1920s, despite the advice of his son, whom he borrows from for his stock market adventures. Junior loses quite a bit of money in the stock market crash and has to liquidate some of his Standard Oil stock during the New Deal years. He also has to borrow to meet his obligations. Ground is broken for Rockefeller Center in 1931, providing jobs for workers during the depression. Senior never visits the building.

Junior distributes his wealth to his family in the form of trust funds, established before a hike in the inheritance tax. In total, he transfers \$102 million.

Senior moves to Florida at the age of ninety-five. At ninety-seven he is still dabbling in the stock market. He dies on May 23, 1937. He is buried in Cleveland between Eliza and Cettie.



Characters

John Davison Rockefeller

John D. Rockefeller is born on July 8, 1839 to William Avery and Eliza Rockefeller. He is born in their small house in Richford, New York. His family moves to Moravia when he is three years old, and then to Owego. He is educated in the local schools and attends the Owego Academy where he is an average student. After the move to Ohio and his father's marriage to Margaret Allen, he wants to end his dependence on his father. He quits school, attends a commercial college and begins work as an assistant bookkeeper. Promoted to chief bookkeeper at the age of nineteen, he soon leaves to open his own commodity commission house and becomes wealthy during the Civil War. He soon become partners with a kerosene producer and opens a refinery in 1863. This is his entry into the oil business.

John and wife Cettie have five children, four of whom survive: Bessie, Alta, Edith and John Jr. He is devoted to his children, spending as much time as possible with them.

John D. is proper, pious and devoutly religious, but he is ruthless in his business dealings. He fights overproduction and falling oil prices by absorbing the competition so he can control supply. He is the creator of the original trust and the tactics of the Standard Oil Trust lead to the enactment of the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890 and is used to dissolve the trust, making him the world's richest man. His Baptist upbringing leads him to believe that God gives men wealth to use for the betterment of mankind and he is also the world's biggest philanthropist.

William Avery Rokerfeller

William Avery is the third child of Godfrey and Lucy. He is basically a confidence man and lives off of the various schemes and deceptions he promotes. He is known as Big Bill Rockefeller. In 1837, he marries Eliza Davison and has children by her and with his mistress, Nancy Brown, whom he brings to live with them until he sends her and her two daughters to live with her parents. The he resumes his vagabond life as a peddler, leaving his family alone for months at a time. He runs a logging business and there are rumors that he is the head of a horse theft ring. Later, he misrepresents himself as a doctor and sells cancer cures and other medicines and becomes a bigamist when he marries Margaret Allen. He continues to visit Cleveland once or twice a year. John D. eventually helps him buy a ranch in North Dakota in such a way that Margaret Allen can never claim the property. He dies in 1906 at the age of ninety-six and is buried under his assumed name.



Laura Celestia Spelman

Cettie attends high school with John D. and they are married nine years later in 1864. Born on September 9, 1939, she traces her lineage back to the Puritans. Her father is a member of the Ohio legislature and founded a Congregational church in Akron. Like John D., she is deeply religious and plays the piano. She attends junior college in Worcester, Massachusetts and works as a teacher and principal's assistant in Cleveland. Cettie has five children with John D., four of whom survive. They are Bessie, Alta, Edith and John, Jr. Like her husband, she is a penny pincher who does not believe in conspicuous consumption. From a religious background herself, she raises her children in a strict Baptist manner. She contracts emphysema in 1908. Cettie dies on March 12, 1915.

Henry Morrison Flagler

Flagler is one of John D.'s closest associates in the early days of the oil business. He is born in 1830 in Hopewell, New York and moves to Toledo as a child. Dropping out of school at fourteen, he works at a small country store of Lamon Harkness and eventually marries his daughter, Mary, in 1853. When he works in the grain business, he uses the firm of John D., which is how they meet. He dabbles in the whiskey business and in the salt business where he loses his money. He works for Stephen V. Harkness and in 1867 forms the partnership Rockefeller, Andrews and Flagler. Flagler eventually becomes an executive at Standard Oil.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

John, called Junior, is the youngest child of John and Cettie, born in 1874. He attends Brown University and begins working for Standard Oil in 1897. He is soon on the board of the University of Chicago and several corporations. Junior marries Abby Aldrich in 1901 and they have six children. He becomes a company director in 1904 and a Vice President in 1909. He resigns from the company in 1910, preferring to devote his life to philanthropy. The only companies he keeps were American Linseed and Colorado Fuel and Iron which gives him problems during the Ludlow Massacre because of labor problems.

Eliza Davison

Eliza is the wife of William Avery and the mother of John D. and his sister Lucy. She has four other children: William, Mary Ann, Frank and Francis. Eliza is born in 1813 and is deeply religious, a trait she instills in her children. She is the family disciplinarian, since her husband is often away. Eliza continues to live in the Cheshire Street house as she ages, but spends a lot of time visiting her children. She dies on March 28, 1889, after suffering a stroke in the home of her son William.



Frank Rockefeller

Frank is the youngest brother of John D. Frank, even though he holds a position with a steel company, remains jealous of his two brothers until his dying day in April 1917. He remains close to Big Bill. His brothers often bail him out financially from the various schemes he becomes involved in. He marries Helen Scofield, the daughter of one of John D.'s competitors and often speaks publicly against his brothers. They have three daughters.

Ida Tarbell

Born in 1857, Ida Tarbell is the daughter of a rival oil man. She grows up in the oil industry and eventually writes a biography of John D. Rockefeller in which she does not favorably portray him. She is a journalist and the managing editor of McClure's Magazine. Ida grows up hating Standard Oil and publishes an expose on John D. and Standard Oil. She spends several years researching and writing and often meets with Rogers and others. The series begins appearing in November 1902.

Edith Rockefeller

Edith Rockefeller is the youngest daughter of John D. and Cettie, born in 1872. She marries Harold McCormick in 1895 and has five children. Edith spends eight years in Switzerland being treated by Carl Jung for latent schizophrenia. She and Harold divorce in 1921. She dies of cancer on August 25, 1932, in her suite at the Drake Hotel in Chicago.

John D. Archbold

Archbold is the son of a poor Baptist minister. He had been a rival Oil Creek refiner. When his company is absorbed by Rockefeller, he becomes an employer. He begins working in Titusville as a teenager and spends his life in the oil industry. Archbold becomes Rockefeller's friend and hand-picked successor and heads the combine during the federal antitrust case.

Bessie Rockefeller

Bessie is the oldest daughter of John and Cettie. Named Elizabeth, she is born in 1866. She attends Vassar, the only one of the Rockefeller daughters to attend college. She marries Charles Strong in March 1889 and has a daughter Margaret. Bessie dies in France in November, 1906.



William Rockefeller

William is the younger brother of John D. and works in the oil business for his brother. He marries Almira Geraldine Goodsell in May 1864. William Rockefeller and Company is part of the Standard Works. He becomes very wealthy, like his brother.

Abby Aldrich

Abby marries John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in 1901. She is the daughter of a Rhode Island senator and has grown up in a lively social scene. John and Abby have six children, Abby, called Babs, John D. Rockefeller III, Nelson, David, Winthrop and Laurence.

C.A. Andrews

Sam Andrews develops the process for making kerosene and obtains the backing of Clark and Rockefeller. When John D. dissolves his partnership with Clark, Andrews and John D. have control of the refinery.

Alta Rockefeller

Alta Rockefeller is the third child born to John and Cettie in 1871. She marries Ezra Parmalee Prentice, a lawyer. They move to New York and have three children.

Godfrey Rockefeller

Godfrey Rockefeller is the father of William Avery Rockefeller. He is married to Lucy and migrates to upstate New York, near Ithaca, in the 1830s.

Lucy Rockefeller

Lucy is the wife of Godfrey Rockefeller and the mother of ten children. William Avery is her third child.



Objects/Places

Richford, New York

Richford is in upstate New York between Ithaca and Binghamton. It is where Godfrey and Lucy Rockefeller settle.

Moravia, New York

Moravia is approximately thirty miles from Richford and is where the Rockefellers move when John D. is three years old.

Owego, New York

Owego, New York is near the Pennsylvania border and is where the Rockefellers move in 1850.

Strongsville, Ohio

Strongsville is an Ohio town twelve miles southwest of Cleveland where the Rockefellers move in 1853.

Cleveland, Ohio

Cleveland is a major Ohio city where the Rockefellers move in the mid-1850s

Oil Regions

Oil Creek is in the Oil Regions in Pennsylvania near Franklin.

New York City

New York City is where William Rockefeller is sent in 1866 to set up Rockefeller and Company to handle the exports from the Cleveland refineries.

Forest Hill

Forest Hill is the Rockefeller estate in Cleveland. It is purchased in 1870.



Saratoga Springs`

Saratoga Springs is a resort area in New York.

Chicago

Chicago is the major city in Illinois where the University of Chicago is located.

Pocantico Hills

Pocantico Hills is where the John D. Rockefeller estate is located on the Hudson River in New York. The mansion, Kykuit was built in 1908.



Themes

Survival

One of the prevalent themes of the book is survival. In the first part of the nineteenth century, people had to find ways to survive in order to live. These are the circumstances into which John D. Rockefeller was born. Once Rockefeller learned that his father was a bigamist, he did not want to be dependent on the man financially in any way and made up his mind to be financially independent and survive without financial help from his father. He quit high school, attended commercial college and found a job, making him financially independent.

Once John D. Rockefeller was in business, survival became business survival. The economy was basically unstable, with periodic busts and booms. As a result of mass production and technological advance, there was a great deal of overproduction. The result of this was falling prices, making it difficult for businesses to survive. Rockefeller understood the economics of the situation and devised ways to deal with it. This meant absorbing competition to control production and stabilize prices which lead to the formation and growth of Standard Oil and the trust that it became. In reacting to market and business conditions, Rockefeller and Standard used abusive and coercive tactics, which is why he and Standard Oil were so hated at the time.

However, Rockefeller did survive. Not only did he survive the dissolution of the trust, he also became the richest man in the world because of it. Rockefeller wanted to live to be one hundred years old. This was a goal he did not reach, dying several weeks before his ninety eighth birthday.

Frugality

Another dominant theme of the book is frugality. Both John and Cettie were thrifty and lived their lives and raised their children with their strict frugal beliefs. They were both very frugal and did not practice conspicuous consumption or engage in any ostentatious displays of wealth. When Cettie died, she had only fifteen suits, something that would not be expected of the wife of the world's richest man. John D. checked every household bill and complained if expenses were too high. He applied the principles of accounting to his own household, even calculating the average cost per person for food at his various residences. If one was too much higher than the others, he would complain until the situation was remedied. If furniture, trees or other items were moved from residence to residence, this would show as an accounting entry on the books.

Their children were required to keep ledgers of their income and expenditures, which John would review each week. They were given an allowance of which they had to save a stated portion and donate a certain portion to charity. They also had to perform



household chores to coin money. John, Jr. used this same system with his own children and John Sr.'s children were not aware of his wealth until they were adults.

The senior Rockefeller continued these practices well into his nineties, although he mellowed a little with age.

Religion Dedication

A third theme of the book is religious dedication. Jon and Cettie were strict Baptists and they lived their lives and ran their households according to their religious principles. Alcohol, tobacco and gambling were not tolerated and never a part of their lives. They donated their time and money to the temperance cause. Many of their social acquaintances were through the church, especially in the early days. Before their marriage, the only social life John had centered around the Baptist church where he always followed his mother's teaching and donated a portion of his income.

John believed that God bestowed wealth on people so they could use that wealth for the betterment of mankind. He always donated a portion of his income to the church, even when he was just starting out with his first job. His beliefs led him to become the world's biggest philanthropist. He gave away a sizable part of his wealth even in the days before the income tax, because of his beliefs. There was a special group at his company that handled philanthropy which his son John, Jr. eventually worked for. He also felt that the family had an obligation to share their wealth for the betterment of mankind and they gave large donations for education and medical research. Senior eventually endowed the Rockefeller Foundation for this purpose.

The Rockefeller beliefs and religious dedication dominated their lives and philanthropy. They were never a part of the New York social scene and only began attending the philharmonic, opera and theater later in their lives.

Style

Perspective

The book is written from the perspective of the author, Ron Chernow, and is presented from the third person point of view. There are plenty of quotes and dialogue due to the intense research of the author. The use of the third person allows the author to provide the background details that are necessary, especially for a book of this nature.

The author, Ron Chernow, set out to tell the story John D. Rockefeller and his life, and this he does, from the humble circumstances of his birth to his death in Florida several weeks before his ninety eighth birthday. In the process, he tells the exciting story of Standard Oil and the business practices of the latter part of the nineteenth century. The author presents most of the action from John D. Rockefeller's point of view: what the market conditions were and how he dealt with them and why he did the things he did.

The third person point of view is appropriate for this kind of book. The use of the third person view overcomes the restrictions of the first person since the reader would only be privy to the knowledge and information available to the story teller. Also, since the book was written by Chernow and not by Rockefeller, the first person would not be appropriate. The use of the third person allows Chernow to supply definitions as well as historical and background information that is vital to the book. It also allows Chernow to capture the personality of John D. Rockefeller.

Tone

The tone of the book is objective. Chernow presents the facts without making moral or charitable judgments of John D. Rockefeller, as so many others have and this is not easy to do with a man like Rockefeller and the tactics of Standard Oil during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Chernow presents the facts as they are and leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions.

As Rockefeller grew his company, he engaged in many business practices that are now considered illegal. These included price fixing, production controls, rebates, and pooling arrangements, among others. Rockefeller's people also engaged in strong arm and coercive tactics where dealing with competitors. As Chernow tells the story, he does so in a factual and objective manner without letting his own personal views come through. He does not try to slant the stories in any way, and often goes to great lengths to present both sides, supported by the appropriate research.

Objectivity is required in this kind of situation and this is what Chernow provides. This makes the book much more readable for the reader because he does not have the author forcing his own point of view. If Chernow had any pre-conceived ideas about Rockefeller, they do not appear in his book. He set out to let the facts tell the story of John D. Rockefeller and this is what the book does.



Structure

The structure of the book is simple and works well for a book of this nature. There is a Foreword in which the author explains how he came to write a book of this nature. The Prelude explains why John D. Rockefeller, Jr. wanted a biography of his father and how John, Sr. obliged his son and sat for hours of interviews with William O. Inglis, one of Chernow's sources.

The body of the book is divided into thirty-five chapters and is more or less chronological, although there is a lot of jumping around in time as the author provides the necessary background information or relates various stories. The book opens with a search for Rockefeller ancestors in Europe and ends with his death in Florida on May 23, 1937.

The book also contains sections of Acknowledgments, Notes and a Bibliography showing the depth of Chernow's research. The reader can easily check the author's sources and find more information on various topics. There is also an Index which makes it easy for the reader to look up information.

The book also presents a genealogical chart at the beginning showing the descendants of William and Eliza Rockefeller. This resource allows the reader to keep track of the characters if confusion develops, although Chernow writes in a way that precludes this kind of confusion. There are also photos interspersed throughout the book. This allows the reader to associate a name with a face, which makes the characters more real for the reader.



Quotes

As Rockefeller reminded his appointed Boswell, the affable William O. Inglis, a newspaperman recruited from Rockefeller's old nemesis, the World, but "for the urgent request of my son, who is not familiar with this history ... I would never have taken the time and the trouble to make any refutation to these questions." (Prelude, pg. xix)

Despite incessant disappointment, he doggedly pursued a position. Each morning, he left his boardinghouse at eight o'clock, clothed in a dark suit with a high collar and black tie, to make his rounds of appointed firms. This grimly determined trek went on each day—six days a week for six consecutive weeks—until late in the afternoon. The streets were so hot and hard that he grew footsore from pacing them. His perseverance surely owed something to his desire to end his reliance upon his fickle father. (Chapter 3, pg. 44)

Such was Rockefeller's ingenuity, his ceaseless search for even minor improvements, that within a year refining had overtaken produce as the most profitable side of the business. Despite the unceasing vicissitudes of the oil industry, prone to cataclysmic booms and busts, he would never experience a single year of loss. (Chapter 5, pg. 79)

As always, the greater the tumult, the cooler Rockefeller became, and a strange calm settled over him when his colleagues were most disconcerted. When pushed, he always stood his ground. The SIC episode showed that Rockefeller was now developing exalted faith in his own judgment. Like all revolutionaries, he saw himself as an instrument of higher purpose, endowed with a visionary faith. He knew that his actions would at first be resisted and misunderstood by the myopic crowd, but he believed that the force and truth of his ideas would triumph in the end (Chapter 8, pg. 140)

By 1873, Standard Oil was shipping about a million barrels of refined oil per year and earning about a dollar a barrel, yet the business remained on an unsure footing. Rockefeller had clarified one thing in his own mind, however: voluntary associations couldn't move with the speed, unity, and efficiency he wanted. (Chapter 9, pg. 160)

Now that Rockefeller headed almost all of America's oil refineries and pipelines, the press belatedly awakened to his existence, acknowledging him as a new deity in the industrial firmament. (Chapter 13, pg. 218)

As he said, "Our federal form of government, making every corporation created by a state foreign to every other state, renders it necessary for persons doing business through corporate agency to organize corporations in some or many of the different states in which their business is located." This handicap forced business leaders to devise cunning ways to circumvent laws and led them to corrupt politicians and legislatures; much of Rockefeller's political cynicism issued from this source. For Standard Oil, a national operation from the start, the antiquated legal framework lured it into myriad legal adaptations. But if Rockefeller correctly considered the legal system an unfair impediment, it was also a spur to his ingenuity. (Chapter 13, pg. 224)



Many of Rockefeller's critics alleged that he divided his life into compartments and kept two separate sets of moral ledger books; one governing his exemplary private life, another sanctioning his reprehensible business behavior. (Chapter 14, pg. 249)

Now, as the sheer magnitude of his wealth rendered his accustomed approach obsolete, he was frustrated that he couldn't give money away quickly enough to keep pace with his mounting income. It took several years before he learned to donate money in the systematic, scientific fashion that befit the scale of his fortune. He needed to forge a new set of working principles for his charity, and it was in his creation of the University of Chicago that he came to define his future style as a philanthropist. (Chapter 17, pg. 302)

"John, we have money," he told his son, "but it will have value for mankind only as we can find able men with ideas, imagination and courage to put it into productive use." (Chapter 23, pg. 472)

If Senior tried to shut out his critics, Junior was hypersensitive to insinuations about his father. As Gates observed, Junior's "whole conduct of life is governed by the purpose, hardly at all concealed, of rehabilitating his father's public reputation." Junior's need to vindicate his father stemmed partly from love but also from more self-interested reasons. As an ethical young man, how could he feel good about himself if he was spending blood money? To give away the Rockefeller fortune with a clear conscience, he had to convince himself that it had been earned fairly. (Chapter 25, pg. 507)

The comment aggravated the hostility that President Roosevelt already felt toward Rockefeller, especially since Rockefeller kept pleading ill health as his reason for not coming to the White House to discuss Standard Oil. Privately, Roosevelt said that Rockefeller felt wounded because the government had published the plain truth about Standard Oil. (Chapter 27, pg. 544)

At Ormond Beach, Rockefeller for the first time developed true friends, not just golf cronies or acquaintances. He was belatedly learning to live more fully, more freely, than ever before. (Chapter 31, pg. 611)

In defending this blatant imbalance, Junior later argued that his father had favored him because he could "carry on his philanthropic and charitable work in the same spirit which had activated him, and ...anything he gave me would be administered with the same sense of duty and stewardship which impelled his giving." In a way that would have been impossible for Alta and Edith, Junior adopted his father's principles and functioned as his surrogate. (Chapter 32, pg. 624)

Although Junior moved in Kykuit after Rockefeller's death, he knew that his father was inimitable, so he decided to retain the Jr. after his name. As he was often heard to say in later years, "There was only one John D. Rockefeller." (Chapter 35, pg. 676)



Topics for Discussion

John D. Rockefeller was not only a business tycoon, he was also a philanthropist. To what does he attribute his interest in philanthropy?

How did John D. get started in business? How did he become a part of the oil business?

Explain how Rockefeller used the South Improvement Company to force his competitors out of business and build Standard Oil. What was his purpose?

Compare and contrast Rockefeller's position with that of OPE. They faced many of the same problems and dealt with them in the same way. Explain why.

Explain the organization of a trust. How did this arrangement benefit Rockefeller?

Was John D. Rockefeller a good, pious, religious man or a ruthless predatory businessman? Or was he both? How did he rationalize his behavior?

What is the Sherman Antitrust Act? What was the result of the government case against Standard Oil? How was John D. Rockefeller affected?