



# Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.

By Ron Chernow



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**National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist**



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From the acclaimed, award-winning author of *Alexander Hamilton*: here is the essential, endlessly engrossing biography of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.—the Jekyll-and-Hyde of American capitalism. In the course of his nearly 98 years, Rockefeller was known as both a rapacious robber baron, whose Standard Oil Company rode roughshod over an industry, and a philanthropist who donated money lavishly to universities and medical centers. He was the terror of his competitors, the bogeyman of reformers, the delight of caricaturists—and an utter enigma.

Drawing on unprecedented access to Rockefeller’s private papers, Chernow reconstructs his subjects’ troubled origins (his father was a swindler and a bigamist) and his single-minded pursuit of wealth. But he also uncovers the profound religiosity that drove him “to give all I could”; his devotion to his father; and the wry sense of humor that made him the country’s most colorful codger. *Titan* is a magnificent biography—balanced, revelatory, elegantly written.



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

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## **Editorial Review**

### Amazon.com Review

The patrician accent of George Plimpton (author of *Truman Capote* and *The X Factor*), with its edge of aristocracy and money, is perfectly suited for telling the rags-to-riches story of America's most famous businessman and philanthropist. Indeed, Plimpton seems to positively relish the superlatives that describe the life of John D. Rockefeller, who was far and away one of the most calculating, secretive, competitive, merciless, and talented figures ever to dominate the free market. Showing, early on, his keen attachment to hard work and keeping accounts, Rockefeller started out as an accountant in Cleveland. From there he went into the produce business, and then on to oil. By the time he was 31, he was the most powerful oil refinery owner in the world. His strategies for suppressing competition and controlling all aspects of the oil business while still paying attention to the smallest details make for dramatic listening in this well-documented and accessible narrative. Plimpton recounts how Rockefeller was the ultimate clutch player, calm in the face of adversity, a manager who was constantly searching for talented people and another way to grow Standard Oil into a megalithic modern corporation. Ultimately his rapacious business practices would make him head of the most powerful monopoly in America and the richest man in the world. Plimpton's engrossing reading of *Titan* brings out the human side of Rockefeller, a man of contradictions who was greedy yet giving, a capitalist villain and a do-gooder. A teetotaling Baptist, he began giving to charity when he was earning just a few dollars a week. As his wealth grew, so too his financial gifts. In the end, Rockefeller's philanthropic acts rivaled the precedents he set as a businessman. The oil baron died just short of his last goal--to reach the age of 100--but the indelible imprint he made on America's financial landscape will live on into the 21st century. (Running time: six hours, four cassettes) --*A.E.D.*

### From Library Journal

National Book Award-winner Chernow's balanced account of Rockefeller Sr.'s life is artfully read by George Plimpton. Billionaire, Standard Oil mogul, and powerbroker, Rockefeller had his start in rural New York State where his upbringing was frugal, at best. Young John showed an aptitude for math and an early understanding of business practices. His mother instilled in him a strong moral and religious conviction, which influenced and colored his long life. Oil was, at first, a sideline in Rockefeller's commodities partnership, but by the turn of the century, it had made him wealthy and infamous. Philanthropy made his name a household word and claimed an increasing amount of time in his later life. Access to the Rockefeller archives contributed to Chernow's success in rounding out the picture of Rockefeller's public and private life. Recommended. ?Joanna Burkhardt, Univ. of Rhode Island Lib., Providence

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### From [The New Yorker](#)

...prodigiously researched ... Chernow surveys almost everything that is already known about his subject ... and also unearths some original material.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Deborah Mele:**

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#### **Donald Andrews:**

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them household or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity here is look different you can read any book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent the whole day to reading a reserve. The book Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. it is rather good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore simply to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book possesses high quality.

#### **Luis Ray:**

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#### **Ollie Johnson:**

Reading a book being new life style in this calendar year; every people loves to learn a book. When you learn a book you can get a large amount of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, because book has a lot of information upon it. The information that you will get depend on what types of book that you have read. If you need to get information about your research, you can read education books, but if you act like you want to entertain yourself look for a fiction books, these us novel, comics, as well as soon. The Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. offer you a new experience in studying a book.

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