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since its original publication in 1952 fosdick s book has been the single most reliable treatment of one of the most important philanthropies in the united states and indeed the world fosdick served as president of the foundation for twelve years from 1936 to 1948 when it was the largest grant making endow ment in the world as steven wheatley notes in his valuable new introduction in part the story of the rockefeller foundation was intended as an instrument of institutional self defense when it was written the foundation community was under mounting political attack from the right and the book was meant to help balance the scales by cataloging the foundation s good works as a deliberate self portrait the book conceals as much as it reveals while in the process it

reveals a good deal about the author fosdick sees politics like bureaucracy as perhaps an avoidable problem and not an inevitable consequence of foundation activity he sees foundations as engaging in the application of scientific technical and organizational solutions to public problems through a venture capital approach to discovering how to resolve them fosdick's higher ground approach became established philanthropic practice far beyond the rockefeller foundation consequently this volume is significant as an institutional history as well as a charter for american foundations

this is the story of an american dynasty it is the story of the father who built the fortune of the son who cleansed the name of the brothers who manipulated both the name and the fortune to their own ends and of the cousins who often wish they had inherited neither

smarter in sixty minutes get smarter in just 60 minutes with in60learning concise and elegantly written non fiction books and audiobooks help you learn the core subject matter in 20 of the time that it takes to read a typical book life is short so explore a multitude of fascinating historical biographical scientific political and financial topics in only an hour each john d rockefeller jr 1874 to 1960 was an american financier and a prominent part of the industrial political and banking family the rockefellers known for owing one of the world's largest fortunes john jr was the only son of john d rockefeller the standard oil co founder and more significantly he was the father of the five rockefeller brothers who include nelson rockefeller the 41st vice president of the united states and david rockefeller chairman and chief executive of chase manhattan corporation john jr attended park avenue baptist church and the browning school and graduated with the degree of bachelor of arts from brown university after graduation john jr joined his father's business and quickly became a director of standard oil soon after he also became a director at j p morgan's us steel company john jr was involved heavily in financing and developing the rockefeller centre during the great depression as a result of the completion of this vast office complex project john jr became one of the largest real estate holders in new york city this was followed shortly by john jr receiving from his father 10 of the shares in the equitable trust company making him the bank's largest shareholder john jr was also well known for his philanthropy and his desire to use his vast wealth for the betterment of other people's lives and gave more than half a billion dollars to various educational religious scientific and healthcare causes both in the united states and internationally john jr died of pneumonia in 1960 leaving behind six children and twenty grandchildren and a vast legacy of financial development and philanthropic support

the first to make use of materials in the rockefeller archives this biography of john d rockefeller combines personal and corporate history to examine its subject's reputation business practices and personal values and attitudes

analyses the 1960 election when john f kennedy was elected president of the united states

reference notes pages 341 349 a few sources not shown elsewhere p 350 351

mr fosdick has written a biography in its formal meaning fully documented chronologically precise and not simply a personal tribute to a friend of more than

forty years standing the book in consequence is both biography and history satisfying all the rigorous canons of personal and social analysis it is to be read as part of the history of our time and as the record of a man of as much consequence to us as have been those other leaders and creators among his contemporaries who have affected public conduct what we have here then is the narrative of a rich man who overcame the almost impossible handicaps of great wealth limited religious upbringing and a narrow and protective family circle he might have become defensive and suspicious or a recluse cultivating private and expensive hobbies or a popular leader and therefore a demagogue such patterns of the behavior of men of inherited fortunes are familiar throughout history but instead he was able to grow and to assume great national obligations what might have been a puzzle slowly disappears under mr fosdick s skillful scholarship and his deep regard for his friend the young rockefeller he is called throughout the book jdr jr as early as 1910 when he was 36 severed his direct connections with business did he do so because of a real or unconscious rejection of his father quite the contrary father and son early forged strong bonds of mutual affection and respect but while there never was hostility on the part of the son neither was there subservience jdr jr continued to support the philanthropies founded by the older man the rockefeller institute for medical research the general education board and the rockefeller foundation and to expand them did he do this because he like other men in public life like theodore roosevelt woodrow wilson louis d brandeis was inevitably swept up in the reform movement of the day that was only a part and possibly a minor one of his development for as his tastes became surer and his vocation clearer he ranged wider and wider until his interests were as large as those of his country and his world as one goes over the catalogue of his benefactions and interests none ever representing a perfunctory concern most requiring long years of careful planning with a devotion to exact detail that only the truly outstanding seem to possess one grasps the sweep and boldness of jdr jr s mind williamsburg the cloisters rockefeller center the museum of modern art the restoration of the athenian agora rheims versailles fontainebleau negro education the four international houses jackson hole and the jersey palisades the library of the league of nations at geneva and the site of the u n at new york the interdenominational movement the long battle to achieve industrial understanding in two decades marked by bitter strife between management and labor this is only a partial list mr fosdick seeks the key to the rockefellers in some observations made by frederick t gates that restless and fascinating man who had such a great influence on the lives of both father and son in 1905 gates wrote to the father two courses are open to you one is that you and your children while living should make final disposition of this great fortune in the form of permanent corporate philanthropies for the good of mankind or at the close of a few lives now in being it must simply pass into the unknown like some other great fortunes with unmeasured and perhaps sinister possibilities in 1929 gates was satisfied for he put down in a private document these remarks concerning jdr jr i have known no man who entered life more absolutely dominated by his sense of duty more diligent in the quest of the right path more eager to follow it at any sacrifice louis m hacker the new york times the central theme of raymond b fosdick s book is its subject s career as a philanthropist this is not an impartial book and was not so intended mr fosdick is an admiring friend and associate of the man of whom he writes but if the book is understandably friendly to john d rockefeller jr it is also an honest book john d hicks the saturday review

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