



# John D. Rockefeller, Sr.: America's First Billionaire (Titans of Fortune)

*Daniel Alef*

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## **John D. Rockefeller, Sr.: America's First Billionaire (Titans of Fortune) Daniel Alef**

Biographical profile of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. America's first billionaire. Rockefeller established Standard Oil and built it into an oil empire that controlled the oil industry. Standard Oil was the nation's most powerful trust, a progenitor of other major monopolistic trusts and one that would help launch Teddy Roosevelt's attack on the "malefactors of great wealth." In the process of amassing great wealth, Rockefeller's reputation developed more facets than a diamond. Few could agree on whether he was, as many called him, "the world's most hated man," or as the New York Times labeled him: "the world's greatest giver." Public opinion ran the gamut. He contributed more than \$531 million to charities and educational institutions and founded the University of Chicago. Ida M. Tarbell vilified him in a series of articles and books. And the Supreme Court ordered Standard to dissolve due to restraint of trade. The dissolution resulted in 34 companies including Exxon, Mobil, Conoco, Chevron, Amoco, Sohio, Socony, Atlantic, Richfield, Esso, Marathon and 23 other smaller entities. The New York Times called Rockefeller's story the "outstanding example of the romance of American business, the most dramatic illustration of the opportunity for amassing wealth which was a part of the era of rugged individualism." Award-winning author Daniel Alef tells his fascinating story and the conundrums faced in appraising his legacy. [6,449-word Titans of Fortune article with timeline, bibliography and links to videos]



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