

was, in fact, an involuntary cry of admiration from the surprised Mrs. Rockefeller.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands.

It may have been one of the happiest moments of the billionaire's life, and Mitchell's description of Rockefeller suggests this was so.

"I'll never forget how the old gentleman looked at me, with those little eyes sparkling, and winked," recalled the professional. "The lessons were to be a secret for all time, and I never gave him away."

Possibly John D. thought his wife's confidence in him needed bolstering every now and then. Laura Rockefeller once, in explaining why she had brought up her children to be modest in their tastes for worldly luxuries, told a friend that, "I have to save my money. John may lose his some day."

There isn't any question but that golf, now such a well-established sport, owes a large debt to John D. Rockefeller. When Rockefeller began to play golf, it was regarded as a strange, senseless British eccentricity; a game to be viewed as a curiosity, but not to be taken seriously. Pictures of Rockefeller at play on the links were a fixed part of American journalism for nearly four decades, and in his pursuit of par he was the American Pied Piper, leading millions of his fellow Americans, rich and poor, into the same feverish chase; one from which there is no escape.

Rockefeller was like any other duffer on the links in the way he went at the game, but there were some subtle differences. For one thing, he had better control of his emotions and his reactive speech than most people.

"When he'd miss a putt," Mitchell revealed, "he'd say: 'Shamel! Shamel! Shamel! That was his strongest language. But then, no matter who he was playing with, he'd stop and practice that same putt over and over until he dropped it."

Rockefeller was way out in front of the crowd in golf as in business, and he anticipated the modern cart-riding golfing set by his use of the bicycle. He always had a boy and a bike standing nearby as he played. When he made his shot, the boy would wheel the bike to him, and off he'd go across the fairway, a glistening sight in his white straw hat, white shirt, white trousers, and white shoes. He played every day he was home in the summer, except when it rained. The hottest weather would not stay his desire for the game, and no intrusion from the outside world, however calamitous, could interfere with his intense preoccupation in golf.

One day as he was playing along at Forest Hill with Mitchell, a messenger brought word to him that Federal Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis had fined the Standard Oil Company \$29,240,000. John D. listened with interest, nodded his head, and resumed his play with nothing more of a comment than, "Shall we go on, gentlemen?"

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 82.

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Another time his game at Forest Hill was interrupted by one of his staff aides, a Canadian-born youth named Cyrus Eaton; the same Cyrus Eaton who himself became one of the richest men in Cleveland—for that matter, one of the world's richest men.

"I'll never forget that day," recalls Eaton. "Mr. Rockefeller and a group of his assistants and business associates were supposed to leave the following morning for Buffalo to attend the Pan American Exposition there. I was at the main house at Forest Hill when a telegram arrived, announcing that President McKinley had been assassinated.

"In those days, anarchism was in full flower and there was a lot of hate propaganda leveled especially at wealthy men. John D. Rockefeller, being the wealthiest man in the world, was, of course, the prime target and symbol of capitalism. It was an anarchist who shot McKinley and the terrible deed had a double import and significance to Mr. Rockefeller, especially as he was planning to travel to the exposition the next day.

"I rushed up to him on the golf course and breathlessly showed him the telegram. Mr. Rockefeller read it gravely, shook his head and then, without any sign of agitation, he went back to his game."

At one point, John D. developed a bad slice, a dread affliction whose terrible implications can be appreciated only by another golfer. Millions of players have succumbed to the slice, surrendering silently sometimes, or simply whimpering in despair as they slid down to defeat. But John D. did something about his slice. First, he hired a photographer for a Cleveland newspaper to take a series of pictures as he addressed the ball—a sound enough idea, to be followed in later years by coaches in all sports. The idea worked gratifyingly well for John D., but this photographic device failed him in his effort to correct his distressing habit of lifting his head every time he brought his club around. Like golfers everywhere, rich and poor, he wanted to see where the ball was going before it even had left the tee. Again John D. fought back at his own human tendency to err by hiring a young boy to follow him around the course. Each time that the great man started his swing, it was the lad's job to cry out shrilly: "Hold your head down! Hold your head down!" There is no record, unfortunately, to reveal the outcome of this experiment. Most golfers, assailed by such a strident cry in midswing, would be likely to go berserk. In view of John D.'s self-control, however, it may have worked for him.

Golf, as played by John D., was something of a mob scene, what with photographers loping alongside, a boy crying out for him to hold his head down, the caddy, a boy to hold his bike in readiness, and still another boy to hold an umbrella over his head as a shield against the hot sun.

John D. did not regard golf in a completely frivolous light. It was,

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first of all, physical exercise, which he knew he needed if he were to extend his life-span. It was also a personal challenge and therefore to be greeted warmly by a man who had met and overcome all the other challenges life had thrown at him. It was a sport that called for the kind of emotional control he had and approved of, and it was a test of personal honesty.

"One of the best places to test a minister is on the golf links," he told his Euclid Avenue Baptist Church Sunday School class, after announcing he was to play a game the next day with the pastor.

"Even the best of them often lose their tempers. I am sorry to say that I have met ministers who did not hesitate to cheat a little on the links."

Rockefeller began to teach Sunday School classes at the Baptist church as a teen-ager and continued this Christian duty through the tumultuous, formative years of his business struggle toward world leadership. He had a way of compartmenting his life—so much time for business, so much time for religion, so much time for play—as he divided his money, with religion always one of the main beneficiaries of his philanthropy. He is believed to have contributed about a million dollars in his lifetime to the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church. Over a long period of years, he matched the contributions of all the other members of the church, dollar for dollar.

Rockefeller in 1872 surely was as sorely pressed for time as he was at any period in his career. This was the critical era, as Standard Oil struggled for a permanent footing. But 1872 also was the year when Rockefeller took on additional duties at the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, accepting the post of superintendent of the Sunday School—a position which he held until 1905.

Throughout his later career as a Sunday School teacher and superintendent, Rockefeller played host at the annual church picnic that was the social highlight of each year. The picnic was held on the spacious grounds of his Euclid Avenue mansion for several years, and then it became an annual fixture at Forest Hill.

It is to be guessed that many of Rockefeller's golf foes found it expedient to let the old man win, and with his keen, analytical mind, he probably knew it. One who did not practice such deception or tact, however you may view it, was a Cleveland physician, Dr. E. B. Rhodes. It is probably no accident that Dr. Rhodes was one of Rockefeller's favorite golfing companions.

"The first time I played golf with him," said Dr. Rhodes, "I was warned that the old man loved to win, but I said I would 'throw' no matches and I never did. In fact, in fifteen years I played with him almost daily I lost only once, and on that occasion Mr. Rocke-

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feller ran into the house and called to his wife: 'Mamma, mamma! I beat Dr. R. today!'

"When we lost a ball, we would call all the caddies and make them look. If they couldn't find it, he would call his partners, and if they, too, failed, he would summon all the gardeners and hired hands and keep them looking until the ball was found."

His refusal to abandon even a possession of such small value as a golf ball was part of Rockefeller's heightened sense of property. He simply regarded the squandering of money or property as wrong.

There are innumerable stories illustrating his careful respect for money and for the principle of full value to be received in exchange for money. One of the favorites of his biographers is his famous barrel bung blast contained in a letter to one of his refinery officials:

"Last month," he wrote, "you reported on hand 1,119 bungs. Ten thousand were sent you at the beginning of this month. You have used 9,527 this month. You report 1,012 on hand. What has happened to the other 580?"

When Rockefeller worked late in his downtown Cleveland office and the weather was bad, he was wont to take a room at the Colonial Hotel on Prospect Avenue—a hostelry, incidentally, which still is in full operation. One such night, when a terrible blizzard was raging, John D. walked into the Colonial and asked for a room.

The room clerk nodded, and as he handed Rockefeller a pen to register, he mentioned that the room would cost two dollars, but would include breakfast. The combined rate, he explained, was a new rule of the house.

"I don't want to eat breakfast here and I won't pay for it," said the great business tycoon, stomping toward the door. There he turned and added: "I pay my coachman anyway." With that parting reminder, he wrenched open the door and disappeared into the driving snow.

Not that John D. did not have his own extravagant little habits; he did. One was his habit of nibbling at little smoked herrings. He always liked to carry a package of the herrings in his pocket in case the appetite for the tidbit should assail him.

He confided one day to his best friend and personal physician, Dr. H. F. Biggar, his suspicion that the member of his household staff in charge of purchases was cheating him.

"The other day," he said, "I saw some herrings in a store window. The price mark was on them. Then I went home and looked up my grocery bills that I had paid. I had been charged eight cents more for a package of these things than they cost at that store, according to the sign that I saw with my own eyes. Now, if they do that with my herrings, they do it with other things. But I have kept quiet about it—only told you. I have given the cook two weeks vacation

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and now I shall watch how much the second cook charges for these herrings. I know that I have been cheated."

Richest man in the world or not, John D. did not like anybody to play him for a patsy.

Another sport, besides golf, that Rockefeller enjoyed was swimming, and he frequently swam in the large lake on his Forest Hill estate. He was no different from any other swimmer in town, except, possibly, that he was given to wearing his hat while swimming.

One of the favorite games at Forest Hill was bicycling through the twisting woodland roads by moonlight, and many a guest of the Rockefellers who was drawn into the game congratulated himself on getting through the experience alive. It was a "follow-the-leader" game in which each participant was called on to follow the lead cyclist, but no lights were allowed—only such light as the moon and stars gave. Many a guest ended in a clump of forsythia bushes with his bicycle sprockets draped over each ear, but Rocky, Sr., thought it was great fun.

The thirty-five years, especially the many summers that the Rockefellers used Forest Hill, were the wonderful green years for John D., his wife, and their children. Theirs was the utopian summer retreat, and in the lavish outlay of money to make it as perfect as possible, Rockefeller gave the lie to the popular canard about his stinginess. There was nothing stingy about John D., but he did have peculiar notions about getting value for his money.

A Cleveland journalist, John E. Bryan, who is today—of all things!—financial editor of the *Plain Dealer*, recalls a revealing boyhood encounter with Rockefeller. He was standing by while his father, Charles Bryan, chatted with the great John D., when the oil king suddenly broke off the conversation to pat the boy on the head and hand him one of his famous shiny dimes. Young Bryan, showing a financial instinct even at that early age, examined the dime carefully, looked up at the wizened old man, and informed him gravely and candidly that a neighborhood philanthropist always gave him a quarter.

"Ha!" said John D., nodding in understanding. "Now tell me, son, what have you done to earn even a dime?"

As remote a personality as John D. was, even to Clevelanders who knew him, he was a familiar figure compared with his brother William. Two years younger than John, William operated in his brother's shadow and yet he was adjudged by those who knew him as a shrewd, imaginative businessman. Beyond this likeness, he apparently was very much dissimilar to John D., as was the youngest brother, Frank.

Neither of the younger Rockefellers showed the religious, conservative streak that characterized John, and both of them were likened to

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their father, William Avery, in their physical appearance and in their interest in the material pleasures of life.

William, Jr., left Cleveland in the Standard Oil exodus to New York, severing his ties with Cleveland almost entirely. So far as is known, he returned to the city only a few times after that. He attended Frank's funeral in Cleveland in 1917, and is known to have visited John at Forest Hill at least once, but beyond those occasions, William's separation from Cleveland was total.

The relationship among the three brothers was anything but one of complete harmony. William and John were close friends through the years, but Franklin was more the loner. Some people said he was more like his father, the senior William, than either of the other sons. Frank was a vice president of Standard Oil—so far as the title and the paycheck were concerned, anyway—until 1912, but something had happened around the turn of the century to alienate him from his brother, John. Family biographers are vague on the point. One widely accepted supposition is that there was a quarrel between the men over the questionable behavior of the father, William, Sr. Another strong possibility is that Frank, who had been in partnership with James Corrigan of Cleveland in the Franklin Iron Mining Co. in Wisconsin, was angered by his brother John's treatment of his friend Corrigan.

The mining company had gotten into financial troubles and Corrigan put up twenty-five hundred shares of Standard Oil stock as security for loans from Rockefeller. John D. eventually took over the stock at \$168 a share, and when the same shares jumped to five hundred dollars each within two years, Corrigan sued him, claiming the oil king had deceived him about the value of the stock. The legal ruling was unfavorable to Corrigan and the verdict was upheld by the Ohio Supreme Court, but Frank Rockefeller was angered by the transaction.

So bitter was Franklin's feeling toward John that he refused to speak to him in the last fifteen years of his life. He became, in fact, one of John's most outspoken critics. Frank severed his business connections with Standard Oil and his brother in 1899, but was kept on the company payroll for some years thereafter—presumably by decision of John.

He remained a resident of Cleveland, but he also had a twelve-thousand-acre ranch in Belvidere, Kansas, as well as an interest in ranches in Texas and Arizona. He spent five months of each year in Cleveland, but never was known to communicate with John—even though John often was in town at the same time.

"I am Frank Rockefeller, stock farmer—not Frank Rockefeller, brother of John D.," he has been quoted as declaring.

Franklin became gravely ill in February 1917. He was operated on for intestinal trouble in a Cleveland hospital and a fatal paralysis developed. But even as he lay close to death, the bitterness of his feelings

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toward John were such that he fretted over the possibility that John might try to visit him in the hospital. He dictated a statement to reporters which clearly indicated the extent of the breach with his brother.

"Frank Rockefeller," he stated, "has not sent for his brother John and will not send for him nor will he advise his brother of his illness."

Franklin had made many statements that must have hurt his brother, but this one, dictated on his deathbed, must have carried the most piercing hurt of all; more, even, than Frank's action at an earlier time in removing the bodies of his two children from the family burial plot so they would not be near the famous billionaire.

When Frank died, all his grieving older brother could do was shake his head and say: "Poor Frank. I held him in my arms when he was a baby."

William Avery Rockefeller, father of the clan, never figured importantly in the civic or social life of Cleveland—probably because excursions out West to sell his patent medicines took him away from the city so often. His trips became longer and more frequent with the passing years. From 1860 on, he was rarely seen in the city.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., once wrote of his grandfather:

"My Grandfather Rockefeller was a most lovable person. My Uncle Frank, father's youngest brother, had a ranch in Kansas and my grandfather was often there. He would come to visit us at Forest Hill but he never sent word in advance. He telephoned from the end of the trolley line and we would send a carriage to meet him. He gave me a .22-calibre rifle, and the two of us used to shoot marks and targets. Grandfather was a great storyteller. He played the violin too, holding it down at his waist instead of tucking it under his chin. All the family loved him. He was a very entertaining man, coming and going when he felt like it. He lived a detached kind of life and I didn't know much about it."

When the older Mrs. Rockefeller died in March 1889 at the age of seventy-six, her husband failed to appear in Cleveland for the funeral. He was the only member of the immediate family who was missing.

There have been published reports that William lived in New York City under the assumed name of "Dr. William Levingston" until he died in 1906 at the age of ninety-six. According to a *New York World* story published in 1908, he married a twenty-year-old girl in 1855, and allegedly lived with her in bigamous bliss until his death five decades later.

Now all the Rockefellers are gone from Cleveland, and Forest Hill has been swallowed by the city. Part of it is public park land and still retains some of its old natural splendor; part of it is an expensive home development called "Forest Hills." People always have had the overpowering habit of adding an "s" to the name of the Rockefeller estate.

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The wonderful summer retreat was especially loved by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller. She eagerly looked forward to the approach of warm weather because it meant that she soon would be returning home to Cleveland with all its familiar sights, its old friends, and all the pleasures of the family estate. When Mrs. Rockefeller's health began to fail in 1913, preventing her from making her usual pilgrimage to the Cleveland retreat the following year, the end of Forest Hill was in sight. She never saw the Cleveland home again, dying at the Pocantico Hills estate in New York in March 1915.

The family burial plot was in Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, but Mrs. Rockefeller, ironically, was not able to return home immediately, even in death. The bar to her return was a remarkable show of avarice by a special Ohio state tax commission made up of John D. Fackler and William Agnew. They had ruled that since Rockefeller had been in residence approximately half of the previous year of 1913 at Forest Hill (due to the illness of his wife), he was, *ipso facto*, a legal resident of East Cleveland and therefore subject to the state personal property tax.

The tax authorities sent Rockefeller notification of their decision and called upon him to provide a list of all his property for the purpose of determining his tax liability. The aged billionaire promptly refused to comply with the request, answering simply that he was a legal resident of New York State and not subject to the Ohio taxation. The Ohio commission held to its position and sent Rockefeller a tax bill based on his estimated personal property holdings of \$311,000,000.

Back home in East Cleveland, meanwhile, the tax rate dropped from \$1.41 per one hundred dollars of valuation in 1913 to a mere thirty-seven cents per hundred dollars in 1914 in gleeful anticipation, apparently, of the Rockefeller windfall . . . a windfall that never fell. Rockefeller simply refused to surrender to the Ohio tax decision, holding tenaciously to his claim of New York residency.

The death of Mrs. Rockefeller added a macabre note to the controversy, because her husband was unable to take her body to Cleveland for burial. If he had appeared in Cuyahoga County, he would have been confronted by process servers. While his attorneys sought to settle the case, Mrs. Rockefeller's body was placed in a mausoleum owned by John Archbold, Rockefeller's second in power at Standard Oil. After six long months, arrangements were made which permitted the grieving oil king to take his beloved Laura home for the last time; not to Forest Hill, but to Lake View Cemetery, only a short distance away from her favorite home.

Twenty-two years later, on May 23, 1937, John D. Rockefeller died in Ormond Beach, Florida. In less than two months he would have reached his ninety-eighth birthday. His body was returned to Cleveland

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for the final services and he was interred alongside his wife at the foot of the tall granite shaft that is the tallest monument in the cemetery; to one side of him is his wife and to the other is his mother. Spread out then in a semicircle, fan-like, are the graves of other members of the immediate family—not including either of his brothers, or his father, however.

The erosion of the years has been severe, but it is still possible to find the signs that Rockefeller left along his Cleveland path. There is still the Rockefeller Building, a seventeen-story building that was one of the city's first skyscrapers and continues to be one of the city's most attractive buildings. It sits on Superior Avenue, between Public Square and the Cuyahoga River, overlooking The Flats and Merwin Street and River Street, where John D.'s career was planted and took root. The building was constructed in 1905 and when it was completed, John D. turned it over to his son, John D., Jr., as a gift.

In 1920, the junior Rockefeller sold the classic building to a Cleveland entrepreneur named Josiah Kirby, who later would fall into the clutches of the law for mismanaging the funds of his Cleveland Discount Company. The new owner of the building promptly dropped the name of Rockefeller and renamed it the Kirby Building.

When John D. Rockefeller, the senior member of the family, heard of the transaction and the loss of his name from the tall Cleveland building, he was upset enough to repurchase the building at a reported price of \$2,972,000, representing a tidy profit, estimated to be several hundred thousand dollars, for Kirby. His first act was to restore the name, "Rockefeller Building." The building later passed out of the hands of the Rockefeller family again, but there was a provision in the terms of sale that the name of the building must remain Rockefeller. It is somehow appropriate that in this city where the great business dynasty was born, and where the founder of the greatest fortune in American history first made his way and lies buried, that the name of Rockefeller should live on, even in such a small way.

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