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Showing 30 distinct works, including autobiographies and memoirs, such as Random Reminiscences of Men and Events, and John D. Rockefeller on Making Money: Advice and Words of Wisdom on Building and Sharing Wealth. The list also features other notable titles like Maailman rikkaimman muistelmat, The Classic Autobiography of John D. Rockefeller, and Quotations by John D. Rockefeller. Additionally, it includes more recent publications like The Second American Revolution: Some Personal Observations, and John D. Rockefeller - Biography. A captivating novel about John D. Rockefeller Sr.'s life has been praised by esteemed publications such as The New York Times and Time. Ron Chernow's biography is described as "unflaggingly interesting" and "reveals the man behind both the mask and the myth." With his impressive bibliography, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington: A Life, Chernow's writing style is characterized as "rich impartiality." The biography delves into Rockefeller's humble beginnings in the early 1900s, when he vied with Andrew Carnegie for the title of the world's richest man. It highlights the spirited rivalry between France and Germany over claims to being Rockefeller's ancestral land. The oilman's honest disavowal of tracing his lineage back to nobility is juxtaposed with the ambitious search for his roots, which took him back to a ninth-century French family. In contrast, Rockefeller's German lineage has been established in the Rhine valley dating back to at least the early 1600s. The book also explores the lives of Rockefeller's ancestors, including Johann Peter Rockefeller, who settled on a farm in Somerville and Amwell, New Jersey, and his cousin Diell Rockefeller, who left southwest Germany and moved to Germantown, New York. The marriage between William and Christina produced Godfrey Rockefeller, who was the grandfather of the oil titan. In 1806, Godfrey married Lucy Avery in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, despite her family's disapproval. This pattern would be replicated by Rockefeller's own mother, Lucy, who married down in social standing. Godfrey Rockefeller was a man with a troubled past, who often got lost in his own thoughts. He had an uncertain look on his face, like he was always searching for something. His wife Lucy, on the other hand, was a pillar of strength and confidence. She was well-educated and had a commanding presence that drew people to her. Despite Godfrey's questionable business ventures, Lucy played a crucial role in shaping John D.'s life. Her strong will and values helped him develop into a cautious and responsible person. Lucy's hatred for liquor was deeply ingrained, which may have contributed to the family's avoidance of drink. The Rockefellers' move westward between 1832 and 1834 is shrouded in mystery. Some believe they were dispossessed of their land due to a heated title dispute, while others claim Godfrey was swindled into swapping his farm for more lucrative lands in Tioga County. Whatever the reason, Lucy's influence likely prevented a drastic relocation to Michigan. The family's journey westward symbolized the primordial American rite of seeking fresh opportunities. In the 1830s, many settlers like them were drawn to the wilderness areas of upstate New York and beyond. The journey to New York by Godfrey and Lucy Rockerfeller was likened to "a game of chance" by Alexis de Tocqueville, driven by the thrill it provided as much as the potential gains. The Erie Canal's construction in the 1820s drew many settlers to the area. The couple packed their belongings into a prairie schooner and set off towards the sparsely populated territory, traveling along the dusty Albany-Catskill turnpike for two weeks. As they neared Richford, New York, the last stretch was particularly arduous, with the oxen struggling up a steep hillside to reach their 60-acre property. The family legend has it that Godfrey surveyed the land and lamented, "This is as close as we shall ever get to Michigan." The spot would henceforth be known as Michigan Hill. Richford was a small crossroads at the time, with a stagecoach stop in the wooded area southeast of Ithaca and northwest of Binghamton. The Rockefellers arrived at an uncouth frontier that had recently gained township status. By the time John D. Rockefeller was born in 1839, Richford had developed into a small town with sawmills, gristmills, and other industries. Despite the challenges, the Rockefellers' property provided a beautiful panorama of a fertile valley, where they lived a spartan life amidst the struggles to clear the land and farm it. She single-handedly built an entire stone wall with the help of two steers and showed cunning, resourcefulness, and composure in catching a grain thief. Her quick thinking allowed her to cut a piece from his sleeve when he couldn't be seen clearly, then later confront him about it without pressing charges. She was also interested in herbal medicine and home remedies made from a "physic bush" in their backyard. Years later, her grandson became fascinated with medicine too, even sending the bush to a lab for testing. This sparked his interest that continued into adulthood when he established the world's leading medical research institute. William Avery Rockefeller, known as Big Bill, was quite different - a free spirit who dodged work and ran away from home. He used charm and good looks to deceive people and had many tricks up his sleeve. As a young man, he'd leave on long trips with no warning, leaving his family worried about him. He even posed as a deaf-mute peddler in one town, using this ruse to gather secrets from the locals. When sheltered by a Deacon Wells for the night, Big Bill had to think fast to avoid going to church where he might be recognized and exposed. Big Bill Rockefeller, a roving salesman, moved to Richford and quickly made an impression at a social gathering with his miraculous recovery of speech. Mrs. Smith was amazed by his ability to converse. However, the locals were skeptical of his claims, as evident from the scribbled query on a slate he flashed: "Where is the house of Godfrey Rockefeller?" Bill worked a large territory to avoid detection, and it was during this time that he met Eliza Davison at her father's farmhouse. With his charismatic personality and flashy attire, Bill won over the affections of the innocent farm girl. Despite initial reservations from her father, John Davison, Eliza fell deeply in love with Bill, a relationship that would be marked by scandal and intrigue. Ron Chernow's literary prowess is on full display with his latest masterpiece, Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller. This sweeping biography masterfully brings to life the larger-than-life figure of Rockefeller, casting a spotlight on the intricacies of Standard Oil and its impact on American social history. With unflinching honesty, Chernow weaves a tale that is as captivating as it is informative, shedding light on the complexities of Rockefeller's character beyond the myth and legend surrounding him. Noted family ties to bold explorers, traders, and Indian fighters existed within the Rockefeller lineage. Eleven Averys were involved in the pivotal battle of Groton during the American Revolution. However, a more sensational narrative was spun around the Rockefellers' ancestry, with Lucy justifiably claiming descent from Edmund Ironside, who became England's king in 1016. Godfrey and his wife Lucy had contrasting personalities; she stood tall, confident, and full of life, while he seemed subdued, often looking defeated. The couple's dynamic was also reflected in their physical appearance, with Godfrey inheriting the Rockefeller family eye color but lacking Lucy's robust health and energetic demeanor. Despite being a schoolteacher and better educated than her husband, Lucy gave birth to ten children, including William Avery Rockefeller, who was born in 1810. Their family life was marked by instability due to Godfrey's business ventures often ending in failure, forcing them to move several times before settling in Livingston, New York. John D. Rockefeller grew up amidst a cautionary tale of fecklessness and poor character, with his grandfather serving as an archetype of weakness. This narrative likely influenced John D.'s preference for the company of sober, reserved individuals who controlled their emotions well. The Rockefellers' decision to leave their farm behind was attributed to various factors, including being dispossessed of their land or a business scam that promised better opportunities but turned out to be deceptive. Regardless of the reason, their migration into wilderness areas in western New York marked them as part of a broader wave of settlers from Massachusetts and Connecticut who were seeking fresh beginnings. This movement was likened by Alexis de Tocqueville to "a game of chance," reflecting the adventurous spirit and uncertainties faced by many American pioneers during this period. Godfrey and Lucy Rockefeller embarked on a perilous journey to settle in Richford, New York, in the 1820s. They packed up their belongings, including Godfrey's worldly possessions, and headed towards the sparsely settled territory. The arduous 2-week journey along the dusty turnpike was filled with obstacles, including dense forests and rocky terrain. As they finally reached their destination, they had to overcome a nearly vertical hillside to claim their 60 acres of land. The area was still largely unsettled, having been inhabited by Iroquois Native Americans before being replaced by revolutionary army veterans. The village square dated back to 1821, but civilization was yet to take hold. As the Rockefellers settled in, they brought with them a frugal culture from Puritan New England, which would later influence John D. Rockefeller's life. The family occupied a small, plain house on their property, surrounded by fertile land and sylvan beauty. Despite the challenges of the rugged terrain, Lucy proved to be a capable homemaker and farmer, managing the farm with ease and completing tasks like building a stone wall on her own. As John D. proudly recounts, his great-grandmother Lucy was renowned for her cunning resourcefulness. She once caught a grain thief in their barn by snipping a piece of fabric from his coat sleeve and later confronted him with the missing swatch, making her point without pressing charges. Additionally, Lucy had an interest in herbal medicines and home remedies, which might have inspired her grandson's fascination with medicine. Meanwhile, William Avery Rockefeller was known for his vagabond lifestyle and schemes to avoid hard work. He possessed a charming facade that initially impressed people, but he often used unorthodox methods to get ahead, such as posing as a deaf-mute peddler or totalling a kaleidoscope to win people over. Big Bill Rockefeller's remarkable recovery from being deaf and dumb left many in awe, including a local woman who exclaimed about his improved speech. When he arrived in Richford, his false claims were exposed when he flashed a slate with the query "Where is the house of Godfrey Rockefeller?" This behavior was typical of Bill's modus operandi, which involved presenting fake claims about himself and his products to evade law enforcement. During one of his travels, Bill met Eliza Davison at her father's farmhouse. He charmed her with his showmanship and flamboyant clothing, earning her trust despite being aware of his deception. His smooth-talking nature and flashy attire had a profound effect on many women, including Eliza, who eventually succumbed to his charm. Despite being from a conservative Baptist family, John Davison opposed the marriage between Bill and his daughter due to concerns about their future together. However, on February 18, 1837, the unlikely couple exchanged vows despite his reservations. The marriage was highly publicized among the townspeople, who were skeptical of Bill's intentions. The economic differences between the two families played a significant role in their union. John Davison had acquired 150 acres in Cayuga County, which was considered modest wealth at the time. This wealth likely drew Bill to the family, and their marriage became a subject of gossip among the townspeople.