


The Vanderbilts

Jerry E. Patterson

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Discusses the Vanderbilt family and how they established their fortunes, examining individual personalities and the glittering mansions in which family members led their fabled lives.

The Vanderbilts Details

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From Reader Review The Vanderbilts for online ebook

Nina says

TRUELY THE GILDED AGE

Paula says

What a great book--in every way! Size-wise it a bit unwieldy, since it's like a coffee table book, and heavy. But an amazing book to read. I don't think I ever got such a in-depth history of a family as I did here of the Vanderbilts. The author has done a magnificent job. One the of things I wished for was a foldout page with one entire family tree. Each chapter starts out with a part of the family tree, but it became confusing to figure out how they all related after a while. And there are many chapters and many people and many generations.

The photography in this book is interesting, too. I was surprised at the number of photos of the older generations, and even before photos, at the portraits of the family members. Most interesting were the photos of the many and huge homes built by the various family members. Though the photos are numerous, I found myself wishing for even more--especially of some of the famous residences, like the ones in Newport and Ashville.

This book provided an inside look at one of the wealthiest families in America at one time. And, it seems, how they managed in a few generations to spend most of it.

Tracy says

I recently went to Biltmore for the first time, and it made me want to know more about its builder and his family. Those Vanderbilts are a piece of work. The author was pretty objective, and the facts seemed on point, but I found myself profoundly irritated at the idea of these people having way too much money.

Vanessa Toth says

While this book has some wonderful photos, it is just a coffee table book. I was hoping to get more of biography of the family, but this just didn't have to amount of information I would have liked. Very easy to read, though.

Maura says

Having recently visited Biltmore, I was curious to find out what I could about George and his wife Edith,

who were the master and mistress of Biltmore. This book starts with the parents and grandparents of the Commodore, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and pretty much covers the family up to modern times. Some members get nothing more than a mention in a geneological chart, while others get entire chapters devoted to them. Although I did learn more about George, there is very little mention of Edith, to my disappointment. There are some good stories about the more prominent family members, and a lot about the houses they all built - the 'bilt' part of their name was apt (although it actually means "village" in Dutch). Over the years I think this family must have kept several architectural firms in business, not to mention construction firms.

There are some mistakes in the book, such a chart showing one son dying in 1906 but the text says he died in 1905. In another place, an engagement is announced on June 11, 1896; then a page later it is referred to as having happened on June 18, 1896. Small stuff but things that should have been caught.

The book is a coffee-table style, and so it's full of photos, which I loved. Besides the houses and many interiors, particularly of Biltmore, the photos of the family give a wonderful view of life in the Gilded Age. I loved seeing the clothing, the hair styles, and the settings - yachts, ballrooms, carriages, racetracks, etc.

J Layne says

These comments refer to the AUDIBLE VERSION. I was inspired to read books on the Vanderbilts after a day in the Biltmore mansion in Asheville, NC recently. George Washington Vanderbilt of Biltmore fame and the Biltmore House in NC get only a few brief mentions, no detail. It does not tell about his daughter's three marriages and that she moved to Europe and dyed her hair pink and never again returned to the Biltmore or the U.S., even for her mother's funeral. She found the Biltmore boring. Her two sons inherited it. The book is interesting and tells about the large Vanderbilt clan and how their wealth has dwindled through succeeding generations, due mainly to the heirs not doing anything to maintain it or grow it. They were plagued by scandal, divorces, family estrangements and squabbles over inheritances. Lesson learned: Sometimes be thankful for what you DON'T get. Riches can be a plague. "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me" (Proverbs 30:8).

SuzukiBathMom says

I already knew something about the Vanderbilts but it was still interesting esp the royalty connection.

Darcie Saunier says

This was a really interesting read about the Vanderbilt family, from Cornelius to Gloria. I particularly enjoyed the chapters on Cornelius Vanderbilt, who is a favorite historical figure of mine. Cornelius was an amazing man who ended his formal schooling at 11 years old, made a fortune in the shipping industry, and then at 60 years old changed professions and dominated the railroad industry, making another fortune. He was awful to his wife (disappearing for three weeks to Panama without bothering to let her know he was even leaving) and awful to his 13 children (he had obvious favorites and obvious NOT favorites and told them so). My absolute favorite line from the book (especially the audio book; great voice inflection by the reader): "His (Cornelius) use of profanity was epic." Love that line!

Catherine Martin says

I listened to this on audiobook. It's not a long book and, overall, I enjoyed listening to it. My only complaint is that it pretty much ends with saying that Gloria Vanderbilt was born and there was conflict over her upbringing. I really wish the book had gone further into the modern era. Otherwise, it was a fascinating glimpse into The Gilded Age from the perspective of one influential and very rich family.

Whitney says

Depicts the Vanderbilts from the beginning to the present. If you love history and enjoyed the Biltmore you'll love this book!

Amy Booth says

This is a great quick overview of the Vanderbilt family.
