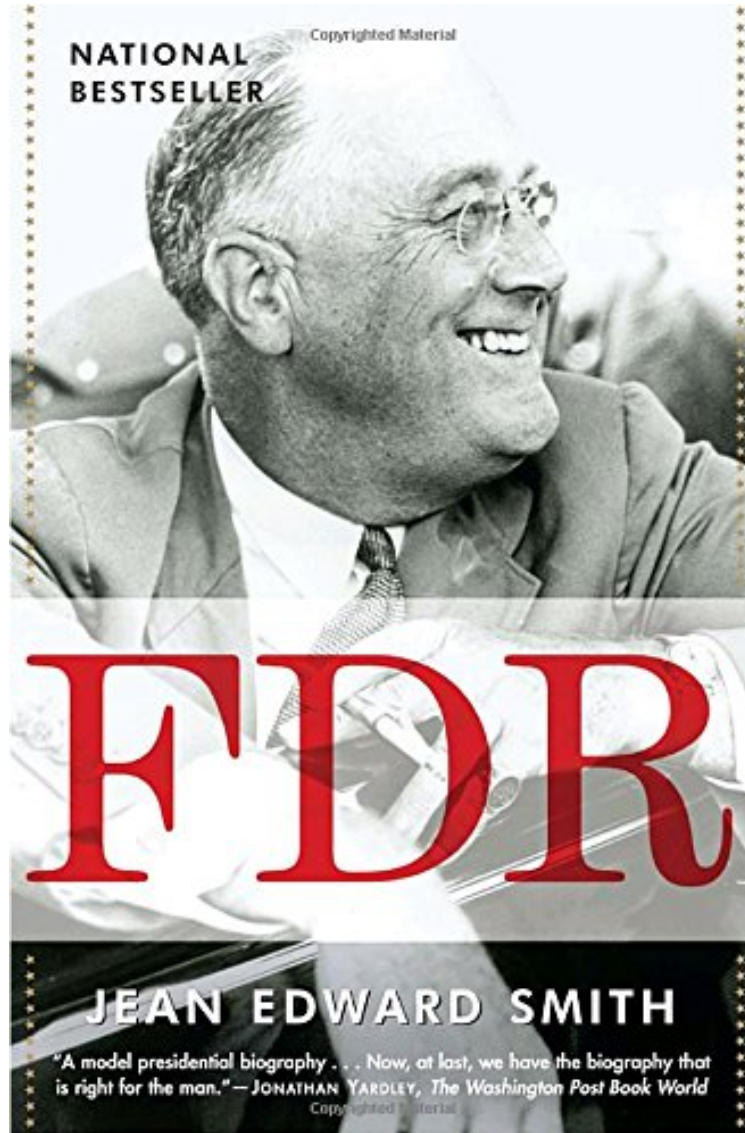


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Jean Edward Smith

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#28446 in Books Random House 2008-05-13 2008-05-13 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.20 x 1.90 x 6.10l, 1.96 #File Name: 0812970497880 pages | File size: 23.Mb

Jean Edward Smith : FDR before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised FDR:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Bravest Man I've Ever Seen By R.L.I read this bio of FDR a few months ago. I had previously read Jean Smith's two excellent bios on Grant and Eisenhower. It is generally thought our two greatest Presidents are Lincoln and FDR--principally because they led the country through its two greatest crises--the Civil War and preserving the Union, in the case of Lincoln; the Great Depression and WWII in the case of

Roosevelt. After reading this book, I wonder if FDR wasn't the greater President--considering his extraordinary length of office--4 terms--and the fact that he was handicapped--a cripple with heavy leg braces who could not walk. And yet he lived his life as though he had no braces. A man of such amazing courage and determination as I have never seen. And it carried to his sons as well, who were highly decorated in WWII with two Navy Crosses and other medals. FDR is a very important man in American history. Without him, there would be no Social Security, which is a lifeline for most retired people these days. Interesting he had to fight some of the same Congressional battles as we have seen recently to get his Depression legislation passed. The difference is that unemployment in the 30s was 25%--not the 8% observed in our recent financial crisis. It was a much tougher battle. And then there was the great battle of WWII, in which FDR organized the greatest war machine in history to defeat the forces of evil. FDR was an outstanding leader, and I believe his experience in his college days as Editor of the Harvard Crimson, for three years--staying on an extra year beyond graduation, as I recall--may have contributed to his leadership skills. I say that as a former Editorial Board member of my college newspaper many years ago. On a more personal note, I recently saw the movie "Hyde Park On Hudson," which dealt with his personal relationship with his cousin Daisy Suckley. The movie suggests the relationship had a romantic element to it, which was not covered in Smith's book. It was based on her personal letters found after her death. It is clear that his relationship with his wife, Eleanor, was platonic for a good deal of their lives. And so it is not surprising that Franklin turned elsewhere for romance--to Lucy, Missy, Daisy and perhaps other women. From a male standpoint, it is not difficult to fathom. Indeed, his mother, an admirer and friend of Eleanor, was also aware of his relationships. Some have written that in our times, FDR's handicap and his extramarital relationships would have prevented him from becoming President, because of media exposure of private lives. I wonder what leaders we have lost since then because of it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not to be missed By Reading Roo As a person long interested, though not fanatic, about the US presidency, this is a standout. Smith is a superb writer and the period is evoked as well as the role FDR played in shaping it. A wonderful read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Comprehensive Work You Seek. By robert bruhl History is his story. A la works by other noted historians like McCullough and Morris, Smith dives deep into the what made the character of arguably the greatest American president of the 20th century. Best of all, he gives his reader not just a report, but also piece by delicious piece an absorbable experience as to why that character was who he was and did what he did with flaws and all, like us all. Clearly, Smith scaled the US historian's literary Everest to transform the most casual reader into a thorough authority on FDR.

NATIONAL BESTSELLER - "A model presidential biography... Now, at last, we have a biography that is right for the man" - Jonathan Yardley, *The Washington Post Book World* One of today's premier biographers has written a modern, comprehensive, indeed ultimate book on the epic life of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In this superlative volume, Jean Edward Smith combines contemporary scholarship and a broad range of primary source material to provide an engrossing narrative of one of America's greatest presidents. This is a portrait painted in broad strokes and fine details. We see how Roosevelt's restless energy, fierce intellect, personal magnetism, and ability to project effortless grace permitted him to master countless challenges throughout his life. Smith recounts FDR's battles with polio and physical disability, and how these experiences helped forge the resolve that FDR used to surmount the economic turmoil of the Great Depression and the wartime threat of totalitarianism. Here also is FDR's private life depicted with unprecedented candor and nuance, with close attention paid to the four women who molded his personality and helped to inform his worldview: His mother, Sara Delano Roosevelt, formidable yet ever supportive and tender; his wife, Eleanor, whose counsel and affection were instrumental to FDR's public and individual achievements; Lucy Mercer, the great romantic love of FDR's life; and Missy LeHand, FDR's longtime secretary, companion, and confidante, whose adoration of her boss was practically limitless. Smith also tackles head-on and in-depth the numerous failures and miscues of Roosevelt's public career, including his disastrous attempt to reconstruct the Judiciary; the shameful internment of Japanese-Americans; and Roosevelt's occasionally self-defeating Executive overreach. Additionally, Smith offers a sensitive and balanced assessment of Roosevelt's response to the Holocaust, noting its breakthroughs and shortcomings. Summing up Roosevelt's legacy, Jean Smith declares that FDR, more than any other individual, changed the relationship between the American people and their government. It was Roosevelt who revolutionized the art of campaigning and used the burgeoning mass media to garner public support and allay fears. But more important, Smith gives us the clearest picture yet of how this quintessential Knickerbocker aristocrat, a man who never had to depend on a paycheck, became the common man's president. The result is a powerful account that adds fresh perspectives and draws profound conclusions about a man whose story is widely known but far less well understood. Written for the general reader and scholars alike, FDR is a stunning biography in every way worthy of its subject.

From *Publishers Weekly* Starred . Independent biographer Smith (1996's *John Marshall: Definer of a Nation* and 2001's *Grant*) crafts a magisterial biography of our most important modern president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Scores of books have been written about Roosevelt, exploring every nook and cranny of his experience, so Smith

breaks no "news" and offers no previously undisclosed revelations concerning the man from Hyde Park. But the author's eloquent synthesis of FDR's complex and compelling life is remarkably executed and a joy to read. Drawing on the papers of the Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library as well as Columbia University's oral history collection and other repositories, Smith minutely explores the arc of FDR's intertwined political and private lives. With regard to the political, the biographer seamlessly traces Roosevelt's evolution from gawky, aristocratic, political newcomer nibbling at the edges of the rough-and-tumble Dutchess County, N.Y., Democratic machine to the consummate though physically crippled political insider a man without pretensions who acquired and performed the jobs of New York governor and then United States president with shrewd, and always joyous, efficiency. As is appropriate, more than half of Smith's narrative deals with FDR as president: the four terms (from 1933 until his death in 1945) during which he waged war, in turn, on the Depression and the Axis powers. As for the private Roosevelt, Smith reveals him as a devoted son; an unhappy husband who eventually settled into an uneasy peace and working partnership with his wife and cousin Eleanor; an emotionally absent father; and a man who for years devotedly loved two women other than his wife Lucy Mercer Rutherford and Missy LeHand, the latter his secretary. This erudite but graceful volume illuminates FDR's life for scholars, history buffs and casual readers alike. Photos not seen by PW. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From *The New Yorker* As Franklin Roosevelt approached the stage at the 1936 Democratic Convention, the steel braces on his useless legs and the support of his sons arm allowing him, in great pain, to simulate walking, he was jostled, and he crashed to the ground, scattering the pages of his speech. "Clean me up," he said, "and keep your feet off those damned sheets." Minutes later, utterly poised, he told an audience and a nation ravaged by the Depression that they had "a rendezvous with destiny." Smith, in this remarkable, sympathetic biography, doesn't flinch at Roosevelt's mistakes; the sections on the court-packing scheme and the internment of Japanese-Americans are painful to read. Smith also does a fine job with a complex marriage, avoiding the F.D.R. biographers trap of being either annoyed or enraptured by Eleanor. The Roosevelt who emerges here neither a stranger nor a painted icon is flawed and magnificent. Copyright 2007 [Click here to subscribe to The New Yorker](#) From *Bookmarks Magazine* The legacy of FDR is safe in the hands of Jean Edward Smith, a renowned academic and author of a dozen books, including the acclaimed biographies *Grant* (a 2002 Pulitzer Prize finalist), *John Marshall: Defender of a Nation* (1996), and *Lucius D. Clay: An American Life* (1990). FDR, which captures the energy, courage, and contradictions of a full life well lived, is considered by many here as the best one-volume biography of that president to date. Several critics comment that in making exhaustive use of existing research, Smith has uncovered little new. Instead, the strength of this book lies in the author's pacing and his ability to capture the triumphs and disappointments of his subject. Jonathan Yardley, comparing Smith's effort to other one-volume accounts—James McGregor Burns's *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (1956), Nathan Miller's *FDR: An Intimate History* (1983), and Ted Morgan's *FDR: A Biography* (1985)—concludes: "Each has its merits, but none matches the commanding authority of this one." Copyright 2004 Phillips Nelson Media, Inc.