

## PREFACE A SECOND-CENTURY MAN

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The name *Charles Stewart Mott* is today most widely recognizable when used in connection with the word *Foundation*. Established by the General Motors mogul in 1926, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation celebrated its ninetieth anniversary in 2016. During those nine decades, the foundation has made grants in excess of \$3 billion, both in Mott's adopted hometown of Flint, Michigan, and around the world. As noted in its mission statement, the foundation's grantmaking supports Mott's vision of a world in which every person was in partnership with the rest of the human race, and where each individual's quality of life is connected to the well-being of the community locally and globally.

Over the years, the impact of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation has been nothing short of profound. This fact alone merits our remembering and learning more about the man behind its genesis. But the existence of the foundation is only one reason the life of Mott—entrepreneur, industrialist, banker, mayor, and sometimes even cowboy—is worth knowing about and studying today.

Charles Stewart Mott (known as C.S. to his many friends and colleagues) was born ten years after the death of Abraham Lincoln and one year before the 1876 centennial of the founding of the United States. Thus, some have referred to C.S. as a second-century man. In that second century, the United States came to dominate world politics and economics to an extent that could never have been imagined in the 1870s, no matter how verbose the jingoist rhetoric of the time. As for C.S., he not only lived through the most dramatic technological shift and period of economic growth that had yet been known, but he actively participated in and contributed to these events in very immediate ways as a major innovator and leader at General Motors, as a public official in Flint, and as a philanthropist who in many ways reinvented the nonprofit model.

Mott's association with GM embraced a full sixty-five years (1908–1973), including sixty years on the board of directors, during which time the automobile went from being an expensive and rare object of curiosity to a staple appendage in the driveway of the typical American household, a revolution that in turn sparked other revolutions in a boom economy, which, though it paused for the Great Depression, thundered on thereafter. Amid this ferment, C.S. and his colleagues—who variously included such entrepreneurial and management titans as Alfred P. Sloan Jr., Pierre du Pont,



