



Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism (Pioneers of Conservation)

Char Miller

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Gifford Pinchot is known primarily for his work as first chief of the US Forest Service and for his argument that resources should be used to provide the "greatest good for the greatest number of people". But Pinchot was a more complicated figure than has generally been recognized, and more than half a century after his death, he continues to provoke controversy. This biography offers a fresh interpretation of the life and work of the famed conservationist and Progressive politician. In addition to considering Pinchot's role in the environmental movement, historian Char Miller sets forth an engaging description and analysis of the man - his character, passions and personality -and the larger world through which he moved. Miller begins by describing Pinchot's early years and the often overlooked influence of his family and their aspirations for him. He examines Pinchot's post-graduate education in France and his ensuing efforts in promoting the profession of forestry in the United States and in establishing and running the Forest Service. While Pinchot's 12 years as chief forester (1898-1910) are the ones most historians and biographers focus on, Miller also offers an extensive examination of Pinchot's post-federal career as head of The National Conservation Association and as two-term governor of Pennsylvania. In addition, he looks at Pinchot's marriage to feminist Cornelia Bryce and discusses her role in Pinchot's political radicalization throughout the 1920s and 1930s. An epilogue explores Pinchot's final years and writings. Miller offers a provocative reconsideration of key events in Pinchot's life, including his relationship with friend and mentor John Muir and their famous disagreement over damming Hetch Hetchy Valley. The author brings together insights from cultural and social history and recently discovered primary sources to support a new interpretation of Pinchot - whose activism not only helped environmental politics in early 20th century America but remains strikingly relevant today.

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