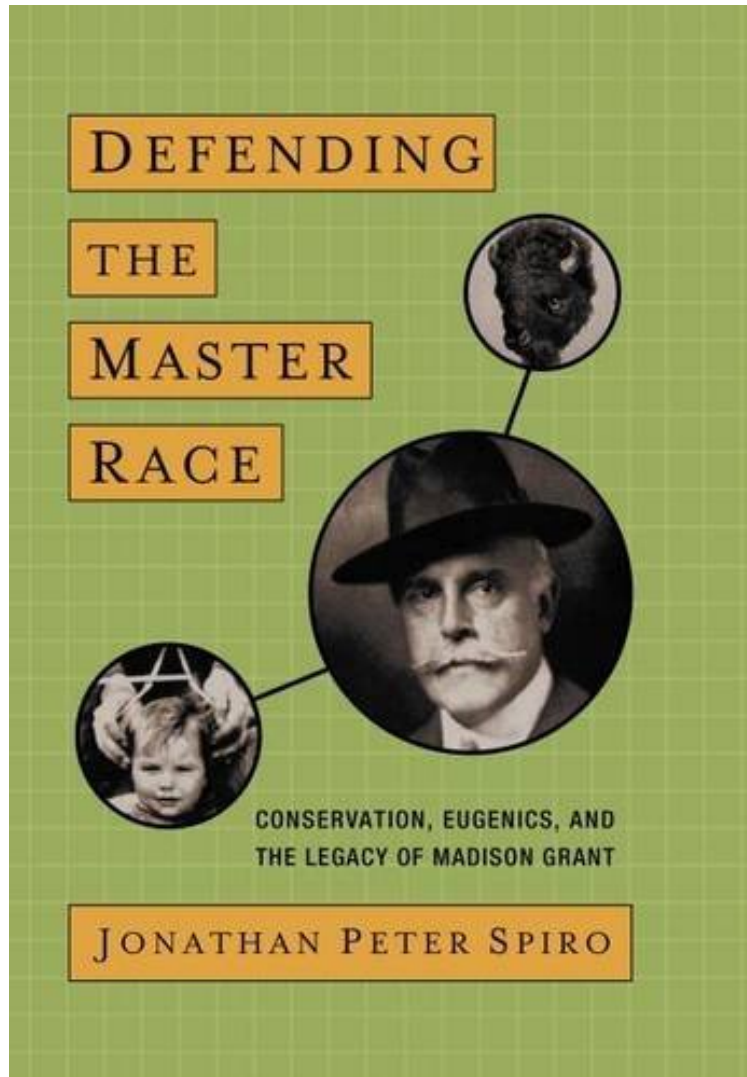


(Read and download) Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant

Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant

Jonathan Peter Spiro

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Jonathan Peter Spiro : Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Extreme Moral Dissonance By Art Shapiro A common cartoon theme has a conflicted person with a devil sitting on one shoulder and whispering in that ear, and an angel doing likewise on the other. Madison Grant is perhaps the most extreme example imaginable of such a conflicted person. He was

arguably the single most important figure in jump-starting the conservation movement in the United States and had a heroic role in saving the California redwoods and the bison. He was also arguably the most vicious "pseudoscientific" racist of the Twentieth Century, and his book "The Passing of the Great Race" (1918) influenced American society and policy for the worse for decades and ultimately became a mainstay of Nazi ideology--a personal favorite of Hitler. Grant preferred to remain behind the scenes as much as possible. He was a masterful organizer and manipulator of public opinion and the political process for good and for evil. His typical modus operandi was to create multiple organizations with broadly-interlocking directorates, flooding media and public discourse with what appeared to be an irresistible "critical mass" of quality judgments. He was the puppet master who engineered the extreme and explicitly racist restrictions on immigration enacted in the 1920s. The notion that immigration restriction was an "environmental" or "resource conservation" issue, which he pushed in tying his two passions together, is still heard today. In fact, the current debate on immigration reform recycles many themes Grant and his various allies and fronts exploited some 90 years ago to great effect. That in itself is troubling. Today's conservationists would justly honor Grant's memory were conservation his only legacy. Instead, the linkage between conservation and bigotry is a legacy nearly all of us would prefer to forget. But we mustn't forget it-- lest we be doomed to repeat it. Spiro's book is a tour de force, achieved despite the convenient "disappearance" of much of Grant's paper trail. It is also a superb history of the interface of policy, politics, and science in the first third of the 20th Century. It is rich in quotable quotes and anecdotes, and not the least of its achievements is to document the fact that most of the leaders of the eugenics movement in America, who were so concerned about "breeding better babies" and who clearly considered themselves to be of superior stock, never married or had children! That includes Grant, who preferred the company of like-minded men in manly sports like big-game hunting and in exclusive, finely-appointed clubs where women were not welcome. This is a very important book that deserves a wide readership. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Astounding revelations on motivations for creating National Parks, wilderness preservation, the Bronx Zoo, and immigration law. By Alice B. Kehoe Jonathan Spiro is a superb historian who uses a broad range of sources and sharp insights into American society to reveal the elite WASP men who pushed for restricting immigration in order to keep their social class dominant, created vast National Parks to preserve habitat for the prize big game they hunted--even built the Bronx Zoo to be sure the species didn't become extinct--and maneuvered to bring down anthropologist Franz Boas, spokesman against their racism. Spiro shows us the contradictions in the character of Madison Grant, Boas' nemesis and leader of the WASP eugenics movement, who never married nor had a child, nor ever had to earn a living. This book is important social history and, so well written, a pleasure to read. 13 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A book that should be required reading for all college students. By Paul C. Johnson Jonathan Spiro has written a masterpiece! His book is much more than a biography of Madison Grant. The first 100 pages alone would make a lucid book on the history of the conservation movement in the U.S., with fascinating details of who did what. Other authors have begun their discussion of Madison Grant emphasizing his part in promoting eugenics, with less emphasis on his role in saving America's biological legacy. By starting with Grant's central role in conserving America's wildlife and forests, in the context of his being a member of the New York elite at a time of maximum immigration, Spiro has helped me to understand how an educated, caring person could have embraced the extreme racism of eugenics. He is a rare author that has created a page-turner from an exceedingly complex topic that is easily made overwhelming or boring. He is a genuine story-teller.

Scholars have labeled Madison Grant everything from the nation's most influential racist to the greatest conservationist that ever lived. His life illuminates early twentieth-century America as it was heading toward the American Century, and his legacy is still very much with us today, from the speeches of immigrant-bashing politicians to the international efforts to arrest climate change. This insightful biography shows how Grant worked side-by-side with figures such as Theodore Roosevelt to found the Bronx Zoo, preserve the California redwoods, and save the American bison from extinction. But Grant was also the leader of the eugenics movement in the United States. He popularized the infamous notions that the blond-haired, blue-eyed Nordics were the master race and that the state should eliminate members of inferior races who were of no value to the community. Grant's behind-the-scenes machinations convinced Congress to enact the immigration restriction legislation of the 1920s, and his influence led many states to ban interracial marriage and sterilize thousands of unworthy citizens. Although most of the relevant archival materials on Madison Grant have mysteriously disappeared over the decades, Jonathan Spiro has devoted many years to reconstructing the hitherto concealed events of Grant's life. His astonishing feat of detective work reveals how the founder of the Bronx Zoo wound up writing the book that Adolf Hitler declared was his bible.

From Publishers Weekly Spiro's unfortunately-titled new book is a comprehensive examination of a powerful but nearly forgotten American figure, Madison Grant. A chief proponent of conservation, Grant spearheaded the creation of several national parks but also, as one of the most fervent proponents of science-based racism, introduced the world to the concept of the "master race." Grant's theories had an immeasurable effect on the turn-of-the-century world; a patrician academic who never held elected office, Grant nevertheless became a close confidante to several presidents,

helping shape national policy on issues including conservation to immigration. Spiro also explores the complex history of the international eugenics movement and how it influenced organizations from the Nazi party to Planned Parenthood. Spiro's text is organized by theme, sacrificing clear chronology for a better grasp of Grant's pervasive influence—a worthwhile trade that keeps the narrative comprehensive and enlightening, peeling back layers of history to expose America's casual racism and the disturbing ways American law set the precedent for Nazi atrocities. A superb re-introduction to one of America's most complex modern figures, Spiro's account can only be faulted for a tendency to dig too deeply, occasionally stalling in minutiae. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Spiro's text is organized by theme, sacrificing clear chronology for a better grasp of Grant's pervasive influence—a worthwhile trade that keeps the narrative comprehensive and enlightening, peeling back layers of history to expose America's casual racism and the disturbing ways American law set the precedent for Nazi atrocities. A superb re-introduction to one of America's most complex modern figures. Publishers Weekly