Gifford Pinchot was not the only wealthy New York scion breaking new ground in the 1890s. With Pinchot's encouragement, Beatrix Jones, a young female friend infatuated with him for a time, found her professional calling and went on to become a pioneer in the field of landscape architecture.

APOLLO AND SHOOTING STAR

THE YOUTHFUL CORRESPONDENCE OF BEATRIX JONES FARRAND AND GIFFORD PINCHOT

ne day, while researching the life of my grandmother Rosamond Pinchot in the Gifford Pinchot Collection at the Library of Congress, I came across the name "Beatrix Jones" on a list of his correspondents. The name sounded familiar to me. Among my great-uncle Gifford's early admirers

had been a young woman, named "Trixy," who so wanted to impress Gifford that she had memorized the scientific names of trees. Nothing else was known of her. And then it hit me. Trixy was Beatrix Jones Farrand, America's first female landscape architect and arguably one of the most influential leaders in the history of American planning and design.

"WE CLOTHE OURSELVES IN RAINBOWS"

Gifford Pinchot was born in 1865 to James and Mary Eno Pinchot, wealthy, hard-working New York City philanthropists of the Gilded Age. Gifford lived what appeared to many to be a charmed life. At Yale, his nickname was "Apollo," the god of the sun. After graduation, he completed courses in forestry at National Forestry School in Nancy, France, and shortly thereafter served a three-year stint as the forester at the Biltmore Estate, where he created the first large-scale forest management plan in the country. In 1895 he returned to Lower Manhattan where, with substantial family support and connections, he hung out a shingle, "Gifford Pinchot, Consulting Forester." Though reserved, Gifford was no stranger to the attention of women. He was a young man who

appeared to have everything a young woman could hope for: intelligence, kindness, good looks, social standing, a good family, wealth, industriousness, and purpose.

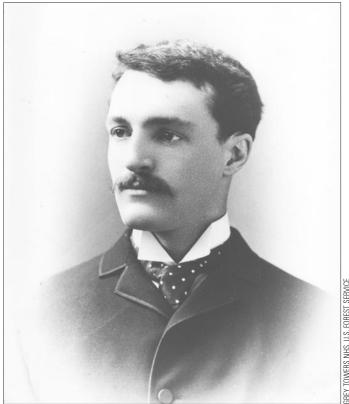
At 26, Gifford started receiving short, sweet missives from a 19-year-old fellow New Yorker who signed her name Beatrix Jones and sometimes "Shooting Star." Friends and family called her "dear brave Trix." Engaging, proper, and complimentary, Beatrix's first letters to Gifford addressed him as "Mr. Pinchot." Beatrix quickly learned that the one thing Gifford did not have was time. Educated in the classics, she knew her Greek mythology; she was self-assured, and upon encountering challenges, she stayed the course knowing that hers was a story as old as time. Shooting Star was determined to distract Apollo in those short, golden years of youth when, as Emerson said, "we clothe ourselves in rainbows, and go as brave as the zodiac."

The letters from Beatrix Jones to Gifford Pinchot, housed in two boxes in the Gifford Pinchot Collection, are some of the few surviving personal letters written by Beatrix Jones Farrand. The reason there are no letters from Gifford Pinchot in the Beatrix Jones Farrand Collection at the University of California is

BY BIBI GASTON



heartbreaking. In 1935, the year Beatrix's mother died, Beatrix set fire to almost all of her personal correspondence, effectively erasing all but her architectural drawings and the record of her professional career. At 63, she was so ashamed of her private life that she would leave no evidence of it except a sheaf of papers found many years later at the bottom of a box. The papers included the divorce decree of her parents, Mary Cadwalader Jones and Frederic Rhinelander Jones. "She burned almost everything making token gesture of clean letters to the relevant libraries and literary posterity," one biographer wrote. "Beatrix's parents' divorce hangs like a stormcloud over her story, and yet it explains the mainspring of her life and work."³



Apollo and Shooting Star. The portrait of Beatrix Jones was probably taken around the time she and Gifford Pinchot began their correspondence. His portrait was taken when he graduated from Yale in 1889.

If not for the small collection of her letters housed in the Pinchot papers, we would never know that she knew Gifford Pinchot, much less that she had fallen in love with him, or that he had been an influence on her life. We know that the two corresponded frequently in 1891 and 1892, in the days before Beatrix's father decamped for Paris with another woman in 1893. Although her parents appeared to have separated when Beatrix was about 10 years old, their divorce did not become final until 1896, the year after Beatrix launched her career as a landscape architect with a substantial project in Tuxedo Park, New York.

Beatrix's first letters to Gifford focused on their mutual acquaintances, career plans, and their comings and goings from New York, Philadelphia, Bar Harbor, Asheville, and the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. She paid particular attention to the well-being of Gifford's family, whom she frequently visited—particularly his sister, Nettie, who was often ill, and his mother, Mary, whom Beatrix called "Mousetilla." Almost every letter contains an invitation to a ball, carriage ride, or dinner with the family. Her letters show a longing for approval if not romantic love.

Her parents' divorce would have precluded marrying into Gifford's moneyed, socially proper family. Divorce was unspeakable in New York's nineteenth-century polite society, and Beatrix's father's departure would surely have been a source of family shame. Meanwhile, Gifford's early life was quite the opposite. Pinchot biographers depict Gifford Pinchot's occupation as his preoccupation, a young man who ran his life like a whistle-stop political campaign. According to reports, the "most eligible of Washington beaux" maintained a mysterious reticence and athletic appearance that confounded the chattering classes for two decades;

even the *Washington Star* commented at one point that Pinchot "cares nothing for women."⁴

Thanks to the small treasure trove of missives scattered throughout two million documents of the Pinchot Collection at the Library of Congress, we are able to map the romantic terrain to show that, contrary to press reports, Gifford cared a great deal for women. There was the "kissable" Maria, who a Yale classmate observed did not bring out the best in Gifford. And then there was George Vanderbilt's niece, the complex, multifaceted Florence Adele Sloane, who tried to attract the young Biltmore Estate forester by composing long-winded, calculated prose, having "boned up' on scientific matters." Previously, at age 19, Gifford had become engaged to Catherine "Kittie" Hunt, the attractive daughter of Gilded Age architect Richard Morris Hunt. The Hunt and Pinchot families traveled in the same circles and Kittie was good friends with Gifford's sister. To top off what seemed like a perfect confluence of love and commerce, Kittie's father was designing Grey Towers, the Pinchot family summer home above the banks of the Delaware River, when they became engaged. For reasons lost to history, this seemingly perfect match ended with an amicable parting of the ways.6 There was also the doomed romantic relationship with Laura Houghteling, a life-changing love affair of mystical dimensions.

"A LADY OF CONSEQUENCE"

Beatrix and Gifford first crossed paths in childhood. The Pinchot family, who lived at Gramercy Park, was likely to have known the Jones family, who lived just nine blocks away at 21 East 11th Street. Beatrix's mother, Mary Cadwalader Rawle, was described as "a lady of consequence" and a "firecracker" who made it a point that her only child maintain good relations with Beatrix's father's prominent New York relatives, in particular with his sister, Edith Wharton. Only 10 years Beatrix's senior, the prolific novelist, arbiter of taste, and garden designer helped nurture the life and career of her niece Beatrix. Aside from her mother, Aunt Edith was Beatrix's closest relative and one of her greatest inspirations.

From the start, Beatrix seemed a young woman on a mission. Despite the obstacles of a broken home, she studied architectural drawing at the School of Mines in New York City and launched her residential design business for wealthy New Yorkers just blocks from the office of her friend Gifford, the consulting forester.

By age 19, with her father absent and her mother preoccupied as Edith Wharton's part-time literary agent, Beatrix challenged herself by taking over responsibility for the garden at Reef Point, the family's home in Bar Harbor, Maine, where she experimented with planning and planting. The land, one biographer asserts, was of almost equal influence on her as any person except her mother.⁸ Although Beatrix had the support of the women in her family, there was little precedent for women in the outdoor professions. Nineteenth-century society's prevailing expectation for a woman included supporting her husband and raising his children.

Beginning in 1879, Beatrix and her mother began entertaining visitors at Reef Point, whether taking carriage rides into the forest to enjoy the scenery of Mount Desert Island or spending time sharing their garden. Bar Harbor was the haunt of many who sought the raw beauty of nature, and Gifford was among those who traveled to Bar Harbor to visit family and friends at their summer retreats. According to his desk diary of August 1891, Gifford was not in Bar Harbor to rusticate or socialize with the Jones family, however. He was working on a report for the Phelps-

Dodge Company prior to a business trip in Detroit.

Reef Point was to Beatrix what Grey Towers was to Gifford. Both were touchstones in lives dedicated to nature and the outdoors. Whereas Gifford's ancestors made their fortune in timber and dry goods, Beatrix prided herself on "coming from five generations of gardeners." And while Gifford's focus was the forest and Beatrix's the garden, each struggled to explain the principles of their respective professions—forestry and landscape gardening—to an uninformed public. Most of their friends, family, and clients had little or no idea what either of them actually did. 11

"DEAR MR. PINCHOT"

Beatrix penned her first letter to Gifford in August 1891 from Reef Point, Maine, to thank him for a book he had sent. Acknowledging the book, it appears, was a pretext. "Dear Mr. Pinchot," she began.¹²

That book is perfectly delightful. I have already suggested to my father several new specimens of tropical trees which I think ought to do well in this climate. Honestly tho' it was awfully good of you and I am ever so much obliged to you for it....

Do you want to go to Mrs. McClean's dance this evening at the club? You won't be following out my instructions unless you do go, and besides I must know if these are your sentiments on the subject of "shop worn." If by any chance you can't go, telephone down here, but if we hear nothing to the contrary, we will stop for you at a quarter to ten. You are probably invited after all.

Sincerely yours,

Beatrix Jones

We do not know whether Beatrix and Gifford attended Mrs. McClean's dance or what transpired. Regardless, Shooting Star stayed the course. One month later she wrote Gifford another thank-you note, this time addressing him by his first name. He had given her a magnifying lens for the detailed observation of her beloved Mount Desert Island plants.

Dear Gifford,

Thank you very much for getting me the lens. It was awfully good of you to take so much trouble, but you forgot to tell me how much it cost; and as it was a commission, you remember, I want to pay my just debts, for even Hickory Ghosts do that. It is a very nice one, and it went for a long walk with me yesterday—in fact it went over the mountain that you sneaked out of going up with me, and we had a very instructive day, and I have already found out that I know considerably less than I thought I did.

I am glad that you express a joy, timid or otherwise at having me at Milford in the early part of October, as I thought you would probably write and say you were so sorry but you would have to go away just then to examine something at Kalamazoo or Tahiti. As you are fond of taking the next boat or train whenever I ask you to do anything, as you may perhaps remember!

Gifford Pinchot's desk diary in 1891 reads like a politician's campaign plan. In January of that year, Phelps-Dodge contracted Gifford to assess its forested properties in Pennsylvania and the South. While he was in Alabama, his client persuaded him to head to Arizona and Southern California "to study his land and the question of planting it." The down side of the proposition: "Management expenses. No salary." When Beatrix first wrote



Throughout her life, Reef Point served as an inspiration, a touchstone, a refuge, and an experimental station for Beatrix Jones Farrand. Her attempt to turn the estate into a horticultural study center failed, but did result in her papers being donated to the University of California at Berkeley.

to him in 1891, her letters do not indicate any knowledge of his western adventure, one that took him to the Grand Canyon and Yosemite Valley. At the time, he was consumed with establishing himself and his emerging profession.

Returning to Manhattan, he spent most of August with his family in Milford, beginning work on his book A Primer of Forestry and recovering from his trip. Reestablishing contact, Beatrix wrote to Gifford again on September 23, 1891:

Dear Gifford,

Please excuse me for having been so rude in not having written you before but excuses are nonsense so here goes. Yours received and read with pleasure, also enclosed, please find \$2 in payment of statement in your last. I hope this will catch you before you go to the wilds but I am awfully sorry you are not going to be at home when I come, although to tell you the truth, I never expected to see you, as I told you when you left.

I have been toiling and working very hard at botany lately and the other day found a variety of golden rod (thanks to you and the lens), that had never been found on the island before. Three cheers for me. Also I am making a herbarium of the trees up here, which is most exciting. Day before yesterday I made some good

shooting 23 out of 25 and 42 out of 50 on another target. Also, I have walked up so many mountains lately that I am like you, an Achilles, which is extremely trying.

I wish you joy in your excursion to West Virginia, I hope you will hate it, and wish yourself at home all the time, but I know you well enough to know you won't.

Thank you again for all the trouble you took in getting the lens, it was very nice of you. I am really very sorry I am not to see you at any rate before next summer, but I hope to then.

Yours sincerely,

Beatrix Jones

PS. I enclose you your poem about shop-worn for future use on others.

Beatrix continued sending notes that fall from 21 East 11th Street, at one point inviting him to dine with her family and attend a production of the musical Alabama: "We should be very glad if you would come and would feel so grateful to you if you did anything with us that we asked you. Hoping you will be less haughty than usual and come. Yours sincerely, Beatrix Jones."

Undeterred by his lack of response, she wrote again several weeks later:

Dear Gifford,

If you have nothing better to do and would like to be cheered after the melancholy festivity of a wedding, won't you dine with us this evening at seven o'clock?

Have you seen "An Expert Shot" in the exhibition of Brennan's water colors? It is the little snap shot of the Delaware in all its glory.

Hoping you will be able to come this evening.

Sincerely yours,

Beatrix Jones

Though he allowed little time for frivolity, Gifford did break away for a short trip to Philadelphia for the launch and christening of "the most aggressive vessel of the new Navy," the *New York*. What Beatrix excitedly called a three-day "toot" to Philadelphia, Gifford likely treated as just another campaign stop. His journal does not mention the family that hosted him, the Joneses. Several days later, on December 6, he met with George Vanderbilt in New York. "I had not expected to talk [forestry]," Gifford wrote in his journal, "but he introduced subject and it is decided that I am to make his [working plan] for Biltmore. Spoke about 100,000 acre scheme, and amazed. Am to go to Biltmore with him and a party including Mr. Hunt and Mr. Olmsted about New Year. Object: to get opinion about feasibility of handling tract profitably." 14

At Biltmore, Gifford faced the great challenge of his early career. His focus was on the forest, not on George Vanderbilt's niece, Florence Adele Sloane, or Beatrix, who continued to communicate by offering to send photos of the effect of fire on Mount Desert Island for his just-released *A Primer on Forestry*. In April, she reported that she had just acquired a new typewriter:

April 8, 1892 My dear Gifford,

You may be astonished to get a type written letter from me but you may be proud of this as this is the first letter that I have ever tried to write and I flatter myself that it will be more intelligible than yours. I am so rattled that I can't see straight so please don't woop and yell as if you do I shall never write you again. I started out so brashly but typewriters are a delusion and a snare. They are so terribly easy to look at and so darned (excuse me but my feelings are too much for me) hard to manage they seem so coquettish and so hard to please as when you punch them they absolutely refuse to move and if you touch them gently gently they again refuse to play so altogether my doll is stuffed with saw-dust and I would fain weep. So now adieu I must away to feed as the dinner tocsin has rang. In much perturbation of spirit,

Your respectuous: Shooting Star.

Beatrix's lighthearted tone apparently fell on deaf ears. In that same month, Gifford had experienced his first romantic encounter with Laura Houghteling, the most curious relationship of his life. Over his parents' objections, Gifford and Laura, who was suffering from tuberculosis, would become engaged. She would die two years after they met. ¹⁵ Given the tragic circumstances of his new love, one would have thought that Beatrix's letter would be set aside altogether. To Beatrix, Gifford had responded in an "impertinent" manner:

The next time that you write me such an impertinent letter as to my skill on that noble instrument the typewriter, there will be

such music, and of an unpleasant and discordant sound, as it will consist in your own shrieks of pain, as I apply my fingers to your hair and give it a most profound and strong pull.... Are you going abroad with your respectable family, or is your hauteur now so overwhelming that you refuse to play with anybody who is not a Vanderbilt?

Gifford wrote back apologetically. And in turn, she responded by wanting to let him off the hook. He was busy, of course, creating a working plan for Biltmore. But her impertinence over his impertinence probably made matters worse:

Dear Gifford,

I got yesterday the last of your two penitent epistles—you really needn't be apologetic although I am much pleased at the apologies, wh[ich] again prove you to be one of the finest of the great "Ten."—But really I understand of course that you haven't time to write and so will persist in forcing my epistles upon you, even tho' you may be so proud as to leave them unanswered. Although I shall require occasionally a few words of apology and devotion to keep me up to my standard of unanswered devotion. Really is there any time limit on your affection or do you allow each of the "carbon copy girls" four weeks as a whetter of the appetite—Have you any idea when this cruel war will be over? or is the making of a working plan an uncertain and uncanny piece of business.... I suppose that you will again throw cold water on my advances while Mary makes her special interest [known]. She is so worried for fear that you will elope with the Vanderbilt twins.... You must tell me true if it gives you more pain than pleasure to receive the [se letters]—now adieu fair youth adieu. Don't spare that tree and tell me if the twins have scalped you as I take much interest in the welfare of your soul.

Sincerely always, Beatrix Jones

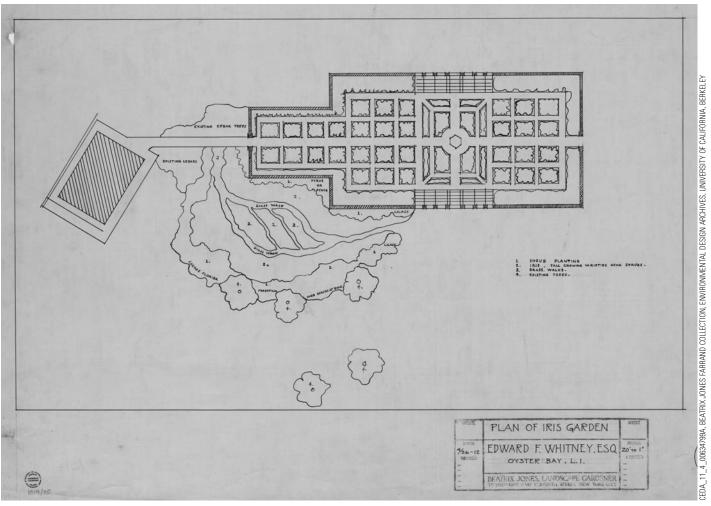
Beatrix knew that she was no match for the competition in Asheville, whoever they were. Though she mentioned the Vanderbilt "twins" (presumably George's nieces, the sisters Florence and Emily Sloane, born a year apart and around Beatrix's age), and a Mary, who might have been their common friend and her mentor Mrs. Mary Sargent and not another rival for his affections, it is unlikely Beatrix knew about Laura Houghteling.

Whatever apologies Gifford offered, Beatrix appeared to move on. Thanks to her mother, aunt, and in particular Mrs. Mariana van Rensselaer, who had been advocating landscape gardening as a suitable profession for women for years, Beatrix dived headfirst into pursuing her calling, landscape architecture.¹⁶

"I WOULD FAIN HAVE WORDS OF WISDOM WITH YOU"

Moving on did not mean giving up, at least not entirely. After all, she and Gifford still shared a common bond: the landscape. Some months later, Beatrix launched a fresh appeal by letting Gifford know that she had decided on landscape gardening as a serious profession, and wondered whether she could meet him at the Columbian Exposition. By that time, she had befriended Mary Sargent and her husband Charles, director of Harvard's Arnold Arboretum, who suggested that she study landscape gardening. "I would fain have words of wisdom with you on the subject of the study of the art also tons of advice," she wrote Gifford.

While the guest of millionaire gentleman farmer Herbert



During her lengthy career as a landscape architect, Beatrix Jones Farrand received more than 200 commissions. Many of them were for Eastern society families with whom she was friends, like this one for Edward F. Whitney's iris garden for his home in Oyster Bay, New York, created in 1912. Her public commissions included several university campuses and work at the White House.

Wadsworth in Avon, New York, she wrote to Gifford to report that she had been to Chicago for the preview of the exposition. "As to the letter which you were waiting for," she wrote,

"it is here in its entirety and glory—As to what I've been up to lately, I went to Chicago on Mrs. Hunt's party to see the buildings dedicated. On arriving Chicago was took with chills and fever. I never left my bed for the three days of the festivity and consequently saw none of the proceedings which was awfully hard. On the party was Mrs. Professor Sargent, and she and I had a beautiful time talking trees, she said most golden words of you and was amusing about the expedition which her Prof. is taking in Japan. She was also very interesting about the way in which she did her flower sketches, and of the time it took her to do cones and such like. Also she invited me to come and play in the Arboretum with the Prof. She also wanted to know why I did not write for Garden and Forest also why I did not take up forestry as a profession!!!"

Signing off, Beatrix made her second reference to a family member:

"As my Father is abroad I shall spend the winter in New York. Any time you choose to write me 21 East 11 will reach me. All tho" I must apologize for not having written sooner you'll not be able to complain now.

Faithfully yours, B.J."

It is unknown whether Beatrix and Gifford met in Chicago that fall for the advice she sought, or whether they met again the following year when Beatrix accompanied the Sargents to meet Frederick Law Olmsted for an inspection of Biltmore's arboretum and tree nursery in Asheville. Traveling by way of George Vanderbilt's private railway car, the *Swannanoa*, the Sargents had long since taken Beatrix under their wing. Her visit to Biltmore was no doubt a part of her apprenticeship. Not everyone, however, was as charitable at the sight of Beatrix Jones at work. Olmsted grumpily noted her presence at Biltmore to his nephew John Charles Olmsted when he said that she was "inclined to dabble in Landscape Architecture." 18

Olmsted and others underestimated her professional drive. She was no mere dabbler. In 1895, with encouragement from her aunt and the Sargents, she traveled to Europe with her mother, spending six months immersing herself, as Gifford had, in her chosen profession. In England she met with the great garden designers Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson and visited

Scotland and, later that summer, Germany and then France, where she studied the gardens of Versailles and the Grand Eaux while her mother met with divorce attorneys in Paris. She returned home and received technical training from tutors at the Columbia School of Mines.

Like Gifford, she hung out her shingle in New York City, opening her first office on the top floor of her mother's home in 1896. She wrote innovative articles in Sargent's *Garden and Forest*, and as Gifford had done while introducing forestry at Biltmore, she advocated for making design decisions based on American conditions: "It must be remembered that parks in European cities are intended for the use of a homogenous population, accustomed for generations to obey authority and respect public property, whereas with us they are for the use of people gathered from all parts of the world, many of whom have been brought up under conditions where there was nothing artistic.... Details of the parks in Europe have to be altered to suit our needs." ¹⁹

"I SHOULD SUGGEST THE NAME OF A WOMAN"

Thanks to a small trove of documents in the Pinchot Collection, we are able to place both Gifford Pinchot and Beatrix Jones Farrand in relationship to each other more than 100 years ago. Despite her disappointment that their relationship was never romantic, she pursued a groundbreaking professional track.

The private story of Beatrix and Gifford reveals the gossamer connections of history. Who we are, whom we loved, whom we chose, and who chooses us are the pillars that undergird our success. At 41, Beatrix would marry Yale historian Max Farrand. At age 49, Gifford met his ideal mate, Cornelia Bryce. What little remains of Beatrix's intimate correspondence reveals the vulnerability of her heart. Aristotle wrote: "All that we do is done with an eye to something else." Beatrix's longing for Gifford and Gifford's longing to please his parents suggest such a connection.

By 1900, Beatrix was established as a landscape architect. The romantic terrain of the earlier letters largely forgotten, Gifford, now the chief of the U.S. Division of Forestry and increasingly recognized as the leader of the forestry movement, sent a letter to William A. Boring, who was looking for a landscape architect to design the grounds of the Century Association, one of New York's foremost social clubs:

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of January 3rd which has just reached me on my return to the office, I want to suggest the names of Olmsted Brothers, of Brookline, Mass., Miss Beatrix Jones, No. 21 East 11th Street, New York City, and Samuel Parsons, whose address, I believe is the Dakota, New York City. It may seem strange to you that I should suggest the name of a woman, but in this case the character and work Miss Jones is doing justifies it. She is now employed for the grounds of the prospective Episcopal Cathedral near Washington—a piece of work somewhat similar to that you suggest, and for the establishment of the original conditions at Mount Vernon.

Very Sincerely Yours, Gifford Pinchot We may never know what Gifford wrote to Beatrix, but her letters confirm that she was not memorizing the names of trees to impress him. Within a few short years after she wrote her coquettish missives, Beatrix Jones had left her romantic competitors to their own devices for a career that spanned 50 years and made American history.

Bibi Gaston is a landscape architect and the author of The Loveliest Woman in America: A Tragic Actress, Her Lost Diaries and Her Granddaughter's Search for Home (William Morrow/ Harper Collins, 2008). Her latest book is Gifford Pinchot and the First Foresters: The Men and Women Who Launched the American Conservation Movement (Baked Apple Club Productions, LLC, 2016).

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