



# Charles Lathrop Pack: Timberman, Forest Conservationist, and Pioneer in Forest Education

*Alexandra Eyle*

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## **Charles Lathrop Pack: Timberman, Forest Conservationist, and Pioneer in Forest Education**

Alexandra Eyle

Born in 1857, Charles Lathrop Pack made his fortune by investing in southern timber, banking, and real estate and by inheriting his father's Michigan timber mills. But by the time he died in 1937, Pack was known internationally as one of the most powerful people in the American forest conservation movement. Spurred on by Theodore Roosevelt's historic Conference of Governors in 1908 (which brought together for the first time state and federal officials and timber men to discuss forest conservation), Pack fervently took up the cause of conservation, which was becoming increasingly popular. Working closely with the Department of Agriculture's chief forester, Gifford Pinchot, Pack learned to use the power of the press to publicize environmental issues. He eventually devised massive campaigns to promote public awareness. Through his efforts, conservation would become a household word as Americans began planting trees and working to save forests. By the time Pack died, he had headed a major conservation congress and helped fund several lobbying organizations instrumental in getting critical forest-management legislation passed. This book reveals Pack's complex personality and dynamic character and masterfully charts the politics of the environmental movement. While working as a conservationist, Pack presented himself as a retired timber magnate who believed timber should be replanted when cut and managed as a renewable crop. Yet this book reveals that he never retired from the timber industry - and never applied forest management or conservation practices to his timber business. In fact, he may have become a forest conservationist at first merely as a way to surpass his well-beloved father in his many accomplishments. Nevertheless, regardless of his motives, Pack became a tremendous force in changing people's attitudes toward the environment. Drawing extensively on Pack's personal correspondence and documents, Eyle creates a detailed portrait of a timber baron who de

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