

# The Pinchots and The Greatest Good: How One Family Improved Social Justice and Civil Rights in America

The Pinchot family has a long-standing goal of conservation, civil rights, and social justice. Gifford Pinchot was not just a conservationist and a forester—he was a trust buster, fearless explorer, and a proponent of public electric power. He fought the corruption in which the rich and powerful dominated the agenda of government.



*Gifford Pinchot*

Pinchot is known for reforming how forests in the United States were managed and developed and for advocating the conservation of the Nation's forest reserves through planned use and renewal. He called it "the art of producing from the forest whatever it can yield for the service of man." We also know it as "the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run." As governor of Pennsylvania, Pinchot concentrated on popular reforms: improving the government economy, enforcing Prohibition, regulating public utilities, providing relief for the unemployed, and constructing paved roads to "get the farmers out of the mud."

This altruism is rooted in generations that came before, during, and after Gifford's time. His ancestors and relatives fought slavery; campaigned for rights for Native Americans; provided free college education to men and

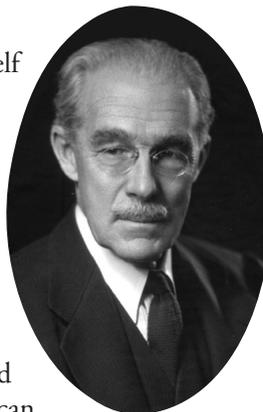
women; supported the arts; founded and supported civil rights organizations; campaigned tirelessly for the rights of workers, women, and children; and much more. Few wealthy families of the nineteenth century can point with pride to such dedicated efforts on behalf of the less fortunate.

The U.S. Forest Service and its partners continue to explore this family's efforts to improve the basic human rights that we enjoy today. Grey Towers National Historic Site, Pinchot's ancestral home in Milford, PA, continues to deliver public programs and interpretive tours to thousands of visitors annually.

These Pinchot family members continue to inspire us and our visitors:

**Amos Pinchot:**

At the risk of alienating himself from his family and his niche in society, Gifford Pinchot's younger brother Amos fought vehemently for basic human and civil rights. We can learn from Amos' perspective that as a society, we must help people first meet their basic human needs. Once those needs are met, people will then think about the environment.



*Amos Pinchot*

Amos Pinchot spent the majority of his adult life fighting for people he thought were bullied by "Big Business" and government. In 1915, he headed an organization called the Little Civil

Liberties Bureau, a group of lawyers who offered pro bono defense of cases that protected basic civil liberties such as free speech, free press, peaceful assembly, liberty of conscience, and freedom from search and seizure. The Little Civil Liberties Bureau eventually became the American Civil Liberties Union. Amos served on its Board until his death.

**Cornelia Pinchot:**

Cornelia, Gifford Pinchot's wife, was a suffragette who helped get women the right to vote. She worked tirelessly for public good, helping to put an end to child labor, taking a stand against low pay and poor working conditions for women, and pursuing fair and just treatment of minorities in our country. She joined committees, started trade union leagues, and walked picket lines with working women who were demanding equal pay for equal work. She was a founding member of the Committee 100, which was dedicated to justice and equality for African American citizens, and helped increase the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) legal defense and education fund by \$120,000 within the first 7 years. Today we can revisit Cornelia's viewpoint that women—as a strong block of constituents—can bring about change in a society.



*Cornelia Pinchot*

## The Pinchots and the Greatest Good (continued)

### Antoinette Pinchot

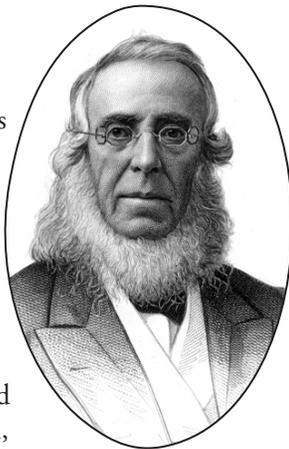
**Johnstone:** Like her brothers Gifford and Amos, Antoinette (Nettie) was raised in an atmosphere surrounded by the arts, natural beauty, and humanitarian causes. In 1892, she married Sir Alan Johnstone, a British Diplomat. She was known to direct her energies toward promoting social causes. During World War I, Antoinette organized and managed the large American hospital near Paris. While living in Holland, she was instrumental in bringing relief to British soldiers who escaped from German prisons.



Antoinette Pinchot  
Johnstone

### Peter Cooper:

Peter, Cornelia Pinchot's great-grandfather, was an American industrialist, inventor, and philanthropist. Because he believed that men and women deserved a free education, he created the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in 1859 in New York City. Cooper Union provided a location for local citizens to participate in social and political debates and hear free lectures on science and government. It also served as the place where some of our country's most important organizations, such as the Red Cross and NAACP, were organized.



Peter Cooper

Cooper organized the privately funded United States Indian Commission,

dedicated to protecting and elevating Native Americans in the United States and eliminating warfare in the western territories. His altruism was felt throughout the generations, as evidenced in a letter he wrote to the governor of New York in 1867: *"A good human intelligence feels bound to use all its powers to accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number of people."* Hmmmm.... sounds familiar!

**James Pinchot:** According to Gifford Pinchot, it was his father James whose "...foresight and tenacity were responsible... for bringing Forestry to this continent. That being true, he was and is fairly entitled to be called the Father of Forestry in America." It was James who encouraged Gifford to pursue a career in forestry when no such profession existed in America. He also endowed the Yale School of Forestry and dedicated a portion of his Grey Towers estate to establish the Milford Forest Experiment Station, the first of its kind in the United States.



James Pinchot

James participated in the financing and founding of the National Academy of Design and the American Museum of Natural History. He was also instrumental in bringing the Statue of Liberty to America. He held positions with the National Geographic Society, Washington Academy of Sciences, and the Society of American Foresters. He was founder of the first association in America for providing model tenements for the poor, a project in which he remained actively involved until his death in 1908.

### Amos Richard Eno:

Gifford's maternal grandfather was a successful businessman and philanthropist from Simsbury, CT. He was a founding benefactor of the Simsbury Free Library, among other philanthropic gestures. Amos built the Fifth Avenue Hotel at 23rd Street in New York City, known in the 19th century as "Eno's Folly" since it was considered too far uptown to be successful. He founded the Second National Bank of New York, headquartered at the hotel, which was hit by scandal when Amos' son embezzled millions of dollars and then fled to Canada to avoid prosecution. Amos personally repaid the millions that were stolen to the depositors. He owned the land that is now occupied by the iconic Flatiron Building and the swampy hunting grounds now known as Madison Square Park, where the official rules of baseball were developed because he allowed baseball teams to practice there.



Amos Richard Eno

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*"A good human intelligence feels bound to use all its powers to accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number of people."*

—Peter Cooper

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**Want to learn more about these fascinating family members?** If so, ask us about the walking tours of both Milford and New York City, the lecture/film series, and the publication "The Pinchots of Grey Towers: One Family, One House, One Legacy."