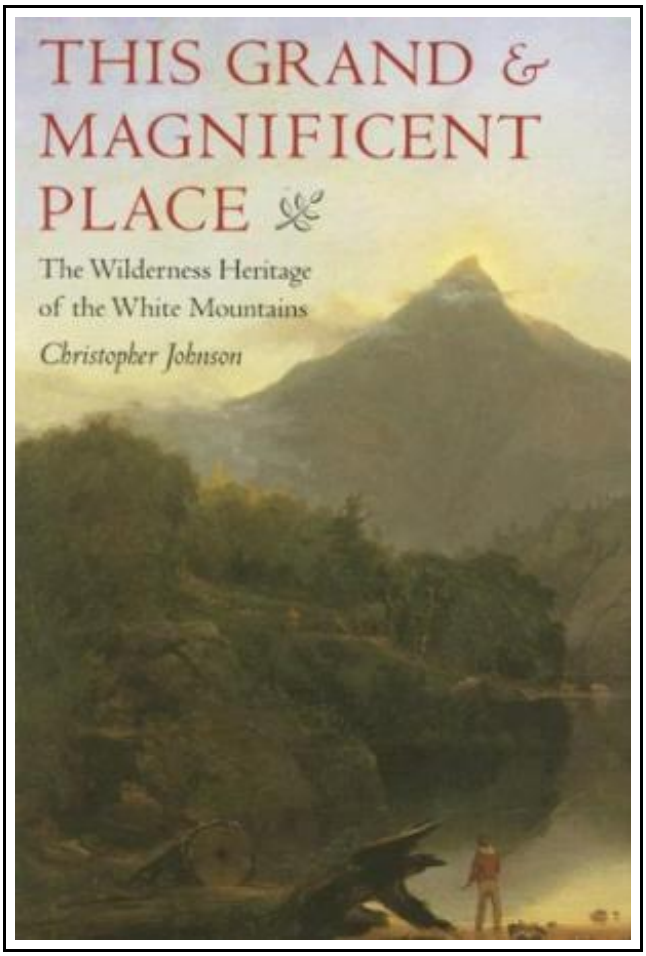
This Grand and Magnificent Place: The Wilderness Heritage of the White Mountains



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University Press of New England. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, This Grand and Magnificent Place: The Wilderness Heritage of the White Mountains, Christopher Johnson, This is the complex story of New Hampshire's White Mountains, from the range's days as the majestic homeland of the Abenaki, first seen by English colonists four centuries ago, to its unassailable standing today as one of America's most beloved national forests, comprising 112,000 acres of protected wilderness. Christopher Johnson, an avid hiker intimately familiar with the White Mountains, achieves two important objectives in This Grand and Magnificent Place. He lovingly explores their rich ecological, political, economic, and cultural history and, more broadly, opens a panoramic window on the evolution of American attitudes and policies toward wilderness over time. Two competing visions of wilderness historically have coexisted in America: the instrumental, in which the wilderness is seen as a conglomeration of resources to be exploited for the benefit of entrepreneurs and consumers, and the aesthetic, in which the wilderness is appreciated for its natural beauty, the personal growth that it stimulates, the national pride it engenders, and the spiritual truth it offers. Johnson never loses sight of this fundamental dichotomy as he shares marvelous true tales of the first intrepid European settlers who "tamed" the Whites. He discusses Ethan Allen Crawford, the area's first innkeeper, the emergence of tourism, and America's love affair with the "wilderness experience"; and he explores tales of Thomas Cole, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and other renowned artists who immortalized these mountains in their works. He considers the coming of grand resort hotels-and the contemporaneous wilderness revival-in the late nineteenth century and the passing of the landmark 1911 Weeks Act, which was instrumental in preserving American wilderness in the face of development and threats of irreparable environmental damage. Johnson traces the perilous course...

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