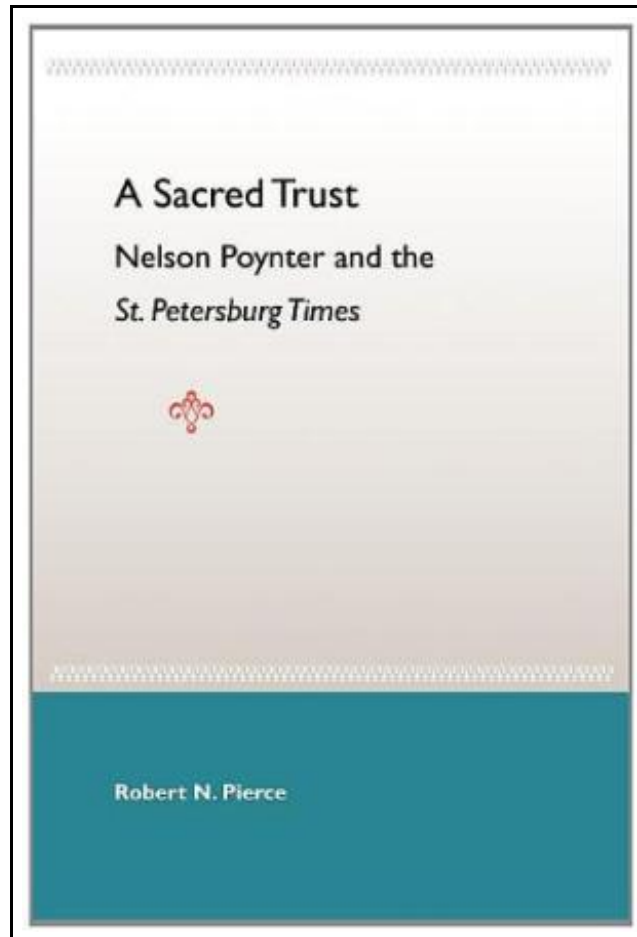


A Sacred Trust: Nelson Poynter and the St. Petersburg Times



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(Juliet Mertz)

A SACRED TRUST: NELSON POYNTER AND THE ST. PETERSBURG TIMES



University Press of Florida. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 424 pages. Dimensions: 8.8in. x 5.9in. x 1.2in. An important contribution to the understanding of publishing, power, the history of journalism and Florida, and the possible effect of a magnificent obsession. . . . skilled and largely unbiased . . . as good an example of the impact of an individual on events as can be written. --Ed Johnson, senior editor, New York Times Regional Newspaper Group One of the countrys most respected newspapers developed in tandem with the sometimes paradoxical life of Nelson Poynter, its owner for three decades until his death in 1978. The St. Petersburg Times, once an unremarkable daily read mainly by the residents of Pinellas County, Florida, gained (as a result of Poynters obsessive demands) an international reputation for journalistic innovation and quality. Poynter believed that a newspaper is a sacred trust. He set a national standard by using color graphics and photos to tell complex stories. He was one of the first to launch a crusade for good writing, and he refused to kowtow to community opinion. In Floridas largest bastion of Republicanism, it kept intact its reputation as the states most liberal editorial voice, Pierce writes. It exhorted its readers to change their minds on gun control, Contra aid, and capital punishment. The Times gave its readers what it thought was good for them, whether they liked it or not. Equally paradoxical was Poynters legacy. His will set in motion a unique experiment in U. S. journalism management that made public service, not money-making, the moving force and primary responsibility of a news medium. This procedure left ownership of the paper to an educational institute, but gave total control to a series of chief executives, each of whom would choose a successor. Any corporate history is...



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