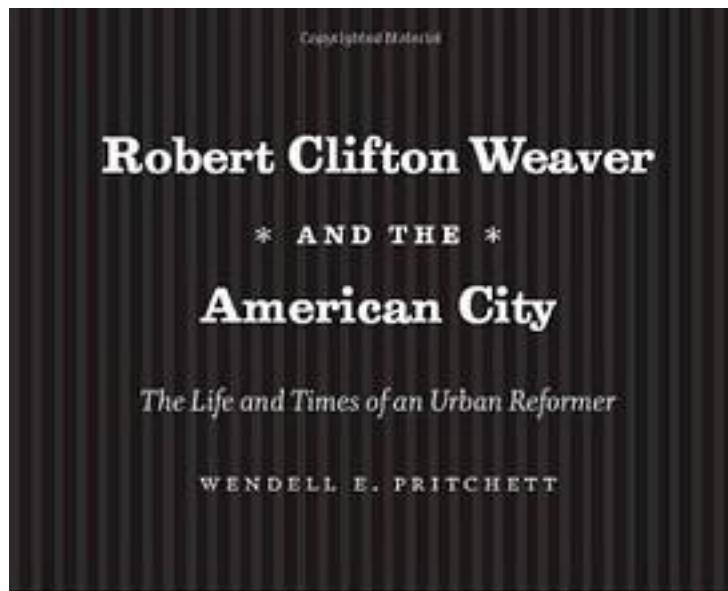


Robert Clifton Weaver and the American City



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出版者:

出版时间: 2008-10

装帧:

isbn: 9780226684482

From his role as FDR's 'negro advisor' to his appointment under LBJ as the first secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Robert Clifton Weaver was one of the most influential domestic policy makers and civil rights advocates of the twentieth century. This volume, the first biography of the first African American to hold a cabinet position in the federal government, rescues from obscurity the story of a man whose legacy continues to impact American race relations and the cities in which they largely play out. Tracing Weaver's career through the creation, expansion, and contraction of New Deal liberalism, Wendell Pritchett illuminates his instrumental role in the birth of almost every urban initiative of the period, from public housing and urban renewal to affirmative action and rent control. Beyond these policy achievements, Weaver also founded racial liberalism, a new approach to race relations that propelled him through a series of high-level positions in which he worked to promote racial cooperation in American cities. But Pritchett shows that despite Weaver's efforts to make race irrelevant, white and black Americans continued to call on him to mediate between the races - a position that grew increasingly untenable as Weaver remained caught between the white power structure to which he pledged his allegiance and the African Americans whose lives he devoted his career to improving. A crucial and largely unknown chapter in the history of American liberalism, this long-overdue biography adds a new dimension to our understanding of racial and urban struggles and illuminates the complex role of the black elite in modern U.S. history.

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