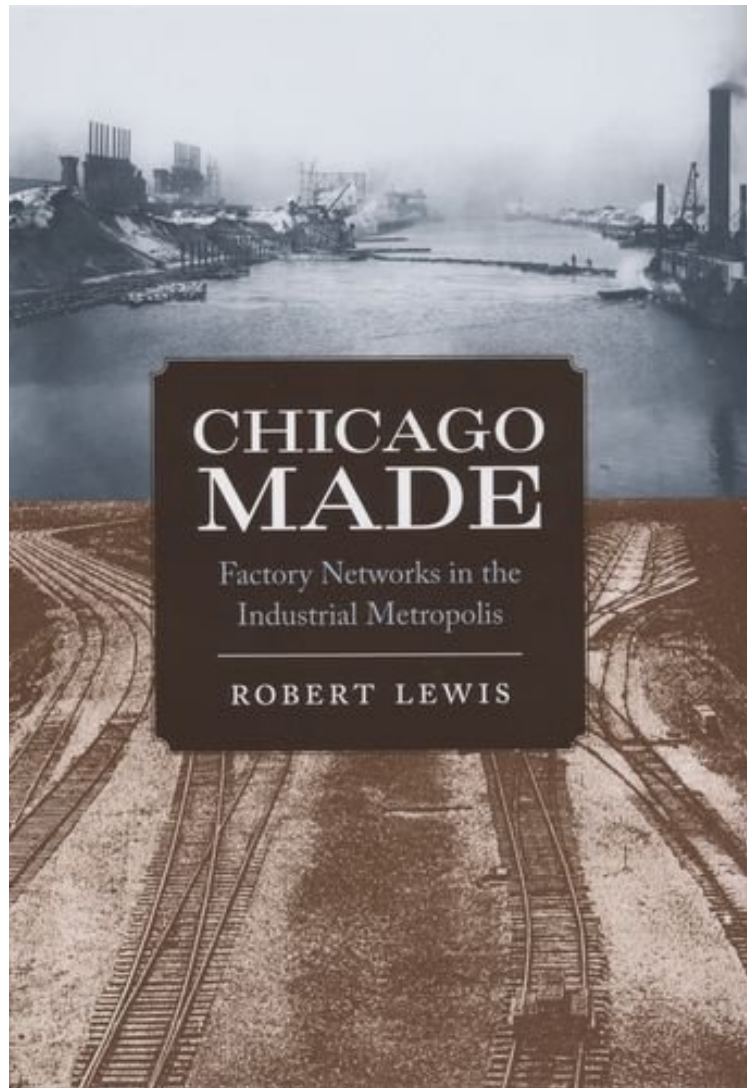


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Chicago Made: Factory Networks in the Industrial Metropolis (Historical Studies of Urban America)

Robert Lewis

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Robert Lewis : Chicago Made: Factory Networks in the Industrial Metropolis (Historical Studies of Urban America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chicago Made: Factory Networks in the Industrial Metropolis (Historical Studies of Urban America):

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Lewis evidently put a lot of work into this book ...By Dennis HansemanLewis evidently put a lot of work into this book. Unfortunately, his interpretations of the data amount to belaboring the obvious. Furthermore, his writing style is wooden. To say that it was prosaic would be to overpraise it.

From the lumberyards and meatpacking factories of the Southwest Side to the industrial suburbs that arose near Lake Calumet at the turn of the twentieth century, manufacturing districts shaped Chicago's character and laid the groundwork for its transformation into a sprawling metropolis. Approaching Chicago's story as a reflection of America's industrial history between the Civil War and World War II, *Chicago Made* explores not only the well-documented workings of centrally located city factories but also the overlooked suburbanization of manufacturing and its profound effect on the metropolitan landscape. Robert Lewis documents how manufacturers, attracted to greenfield sites on the city's outskirts, began to build factory districts there with the help of an intricate network of railroad owners, real estate developers, financiers, and wholesalers. These immense networks of social ties, organizational memberships, and financial relationships were ultimately more consequential, Lewis demonstrates, than any individual achievement. Beyond simply giving Chicago businesses competitive advantages, they transformed the economic geography of the region. Tracing these transformations across seventy-five years, *Chicago Made* establishes a broad new foundation for our understanding of urban industrial America.

Without question, this book is the best interpretation to date of Chicago's industrial development from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Even as Chicago has been touted as the epitome of American urban-industrial growth, the specifics of its internal expansion have remained opaque. Robert Lewis's contribution is to demonstrate that the key actors—individuals and their firms—operated through highly structured and extensive networks that must have provided competitive advantages to the city's industrialists. While individual achievements were consequential, Lewis shows that these industrialists were embedded in this immense set of networks, making the collective perhaps more important than any one individual or firm.