

Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe. *Edited by Robert Lewis*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004. viii + 294 pp. Illustrations, figures, maps, tables, notes, index. Cloth, \$68.50; paper, \$24.95. ISBN: cloth, 1-592-13085-2; paper, 1-592-13086-0.

Reviewed by Andrew Wiese

Scholarship on North American suburbs has undergone striking revision in the last decade and a half. Contrasting with earlier studies that focused on residential suburbs of the white middle and upper-middle class, recent scholarship has revealed a much more diverse suburban world that, from an early date, included industry and other business enterprises, blue-collar workers, immigrants, and people of color. Robert Lewis's well-constructed volume, *Manufacturing Suburbs*, marks a significant contribution to this growing literature.

With exceptional cohesion, the eleven essays in *Manufacturing Suburbs* establish that industry played a critical role in the decentralization of North American metropolitan areas from the mid-nineteenth century onward. These essays, five written for the volume and six published previously, document the creation of dispersed factory districts surrounding Baltimore, Chicago, Montreal, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Los Angeles, and Detroit. In these and other cities, they reveal, factories dispersed earlier and more consistently than previously acknowledged, and they did so for reasons that reflected not merely changes in technology, business organization, or class relations, but also the complex production decisions of numerous firms in varied sectors, coupled with the activity of commercial real-estate developers, pro-growth politicians, and public subsidy. In addition to Lewis, authors include Heather Barrow, Gunter Gad, the late Paul Groves, Richard Harris, Greg Hise, Edward Muller, Mary Beth Pudup, and Richard Walker. Together, these essayists provide the state of the art in the history of metropolitan industrial location.

One of the strengths of this collection is the consistency of its theoretical approach across the several contributions. In chapter two, in an essay originally published in the *Journal of Historical Geography* (2001), Lewis and Walker outline a new theory of industrial location, linking spatial and industrial history as two sides of the same coin. This process of "geographic industrialization" involved not so much the *decentralization* of factories from a central core but rather the concurrent restructuring of both manufacturing and metropolitan space. In this view, "episodic" (p. 93) waves of capital investment tied to the development of new production strategies combined with avid economic and political activity on the fringe to produce complex patterns of multinodal metropolitan growth. These patterns differed from city to city, yet they

followed formulas consistent enough to serve as guides for rethinking the historical geography of metropolitan industry.

This collection makes several important contributions to our understanding of metropolitan economic and spatial history. First, by gathering case studies from eight cities in one volume, it makes a convincing case for the prevalence of industrial suburbanization beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, a conclusion that has been difficult to draw from single-city studies. Second, in asserting the central role of industry in establishing patterns of metropolitan sprawl, the book provides a corrective to suburban studies that rely overmuch on technological or ideological causation. Just as well, the model of geographic industrialization that many of the volume's contributors apply helps redirect the tendency to macroeconomic explanation that is prevalent in both neo-Weberian and Marxian economic histories, requiring more careful attention to the interplay of concrete economic decisions and specific local histories. For business historians, this perspective invites more consistent consideration of the spatial character of economy.

The main limitations in the volume are ones that editor Lewis acknowledges. First is the role of individuals and ideologies in the decentralization of manufacturing. As Lewis notes, "We know little about who made these [locational] decisions or about how and why they were made" (pp. 13–14). Essays by Mary Beth Pudup, Greg Hise, and Heather Barrow begin to answer such questions, as they investigate the rationale of commercial real-estate developers, planners, and the industrialist Henry Ford, respectively, but most of the essays devote little attention to the motives and mentalities of the persons responsible for shifting work to suburban sites. These are the sorts of answers that business historians are well placed to provide. They are also ones that would help unite this literature with the many works on residential suburbanization in which ideas and agency take central stage. Second, these essays devote less attention to the making of suburban homes than the book's subtitle implies. Lewis, himself, admits that we need to know more about the connection between the "industrial and social" (p. 14) aspects of suburbanization. The concluding essay by geographer Richard Harris opens this discussion, exploring the complex factors that linked (and unlinked) suburban jobs and residences over time. Rightly, he argues that we need to document and understand the reciprocating choices that workers and employers made as they crafted suburban space. This effort will necessarily involve approaching the people who moved with industry to the city limits, not merely as laborers but as suburbanites in their own right.

On balance, this volume makes an important contribution to the literature of the North American metropolis and its economy. It establishes new territory that scholars must engage, and

it outlines questions that will continue to push its agenda forward. Bringing these essays to print in a single volume, Robert Lewis demonstrates once again his significant role in rethinking the process by which North American cities have achieved their sprawling form.

Andrew Wiese is associate professor of history at San Diego State University. He has written widely on the subject of U.S. suburbanization. His book, Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century (2004), won the 2005 John G. Cawelti Book Award from the American Culture Association and the 2005 Award for Best Book (North American) from the Urban History Association. His current projects include a volume of essays and documents, The Suburb Reader (2006), coedited with Becky Nicolaides.