



# The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology

*Carroll Pursell*

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From the medieval farm implements used by the first colonists to the invisible links of the Internet, the history of technology in America is a history of society as well. Arguing that "the tools and processes we use are a part of our lives, not simply instruments of our purpose," historian Carroll Pursell analyzes technology's impact on the lives of women and men, on their work, politics, and social relationships?and how, in turn, people influence technological development.

Pursell shows how both the idea of progress and the mechanical means to harness the forces of nature developed and changed as they were brought from the Old World to the New. He describes the ways in which American industrial and agricultural technology began to take on a distinctive shape as it adapted and extended the technical base of the industrial revolution. He discusses the innovation of an American system of manufactures and the mechanization of agriculture; new systems of mining, lumbering, and farming, which helped conquer and define the West; and the technologies that shaped the rise of cities.

In the second edition of *The Machine in America*, Pursell brings this classic history up to date with a revised chapter on war technology and new discussions on information technology, globalization, and the environment.

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