



# Tied to the Great Packing Machine: The Midwest and Meatpacking

*Wilson J. Warren*



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Ambitious in its historical scope and its broad range of topics, *Tied to the Great Packing Machine* tells the dramatic story of meatpacking's enormous effects on the economics, culture, and environment of the Midwest over the past century and a half. Wilson Warren situates the history of the industry in both its urban and its rural settings—moving from the huge stockyards of Chicago and Kansas City to today's smaller meatpacking communities—and thus presents a complete portrayal of meatpacking's place within the larger agro-industrial landscape.

Writing from the vantage point of twenty-five years of extensive research, Warren analyzes the evolution of the packing industry from its early period, dominated by the big terminal markets, through the development of new marketing and technical innovations that transformed the ways animals were gathered, slaughtered, and processed and the final products were distributed. In addition, he concentrates on such cultural impacts as ethnic and racial variations, labor unions, gender issues, and changes in Americans' attitudes toward the ethics of animal slaughter and patterns of meat consumption and such environmental problems as site-point pollution and microbe contamination, ending with a stimulating discussion of the future of American meatpacking.

Providing an excellent and well-referenced analysis within a regional and temporal framework that ensures a fresh perspective, *Tied to the Great Packing Machine* is a dynamic narrative that contributes to a fuller understanding of the historical context and contemporary concerns of an extremely important industry.



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