



American Iron, 1607-1900 (Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Technology)

Robert B. Gordon

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By applying their abundant natural resources to ironmaking early in the eighteenth century, Americans soon made themselves felt in world markets. After the Revolution, ironmakers supplied the materials necessary to the building of American industry, pushing the fuel efficiency and productivity of their furnaces far ahead of their European rivals.

In *American Iron, 1607-1900*, Robert B. Gordon draws on recent archaeological findings as well as archival research to present an ambitious, comprehensive survey of iron technology in America from the colonial period to the industry's demise at about the turn of the twentieth century. Closely examining the techniques -- the "hows" -- of ironmaking in its various forms, Gordon offers new interpretations of labor, innovation, and product quality in ironmaking, along with references to the industry's environmental consequences. He establishes the high level of skills required to ensure efficient and safe operation of furnaces and to improve the quality of iron product. By mastering founding, fining, puddling, or bloom smelting, ironworkers gained a degree of control over their lives not easily attained by others.

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