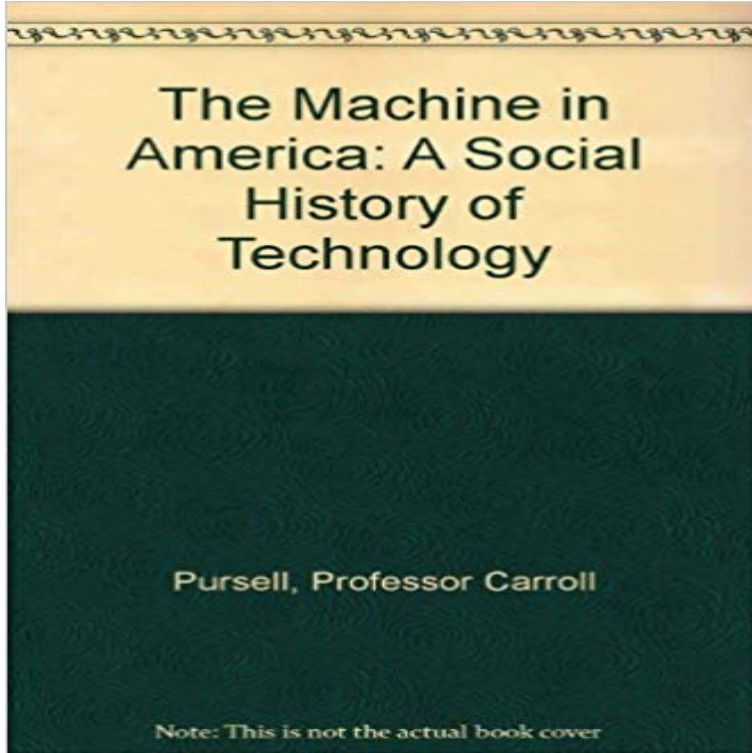


The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology



From the medieval farm implements brought by the first colonists to the invisible links of the Internet, the history of technology in America is a history of our 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 upon the lives of women and men, their work, politics, and social relationships--and in turn, their influence upon 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. And he shows how the export of technology helped to foster American hegemony both in the Western Hemisphere and elsewhere in the world. Pursell also argues that American technology has created a social hegemony, not only over the way we live but also over how we evaluate that life. He shows that such developments as scientific management techniques and industrial research changed Americans' lives as much as the mass production of such durable consumer goods as radios and automobiles. In many ways, he concludes, today's military-industrial complex is the legacy of the intense cooperation between science and technology during World War II.

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