
Contents

Preface vii

Introduction ix

1 Why Manufacturing Matters 1

Manufactured Societies

Manufacturing and Service Economies

2 The Ascent, 1865–1940 21

Creating the Modern World, 1865–1899

American Steel

The Edisonian Electric System

Manufacturing for the Information Age

The Decades of Consolidation, 1900–1940

Electrification of Industries and Households

Modern Industrial Production: Mass and Efficiency

Manufacturing during the Great Depression

3 Dominance, 1941–1973 67

World War II and Its Immediate Aftermath, 1941–1947

Mobilizing for War

Old and New Weapons

The Beginnings of the Computer Era

A Quarter Century of Superiority, 1948–1973

The First Mass Consumption Society

Automation, Computers, and Microchips

Manufacturing Strengths and Problems

4 The Retreat, 1974– 109

Signs of Weakness, 1974–1990

Energy in Manufacturing

Problems in the Auto Industry

Electronic Triumphs and Defeats

Multiple Failures, 1991–2012

Sectoral Losses and Capitulations

The Myth of High-Tech Dominance

“Made in China” and the Walmart Nation

5 The Past and the Future 155

Successes and Challenges

The Achievements of American Manufacturing

Failures and Problems

Global Competition: Never a Level Playing Field

Should Anything Be Done?

Calls for Change

Exporting Goods

Encountering Limits

6 Chances of Success 209

Coda 223

References 225

Name Index 253

Subject Index 257