INTRODUCTION

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Humans have been altering the natural world of prairies and wetlands along Lake Michigan ever since they first built communities here. From the opening chapter on native peoples expanding the tallgrass prairie to the closing chapter on twenty-first century efforts to restore the damaged Calumet ecosystem, this volume provides rich stories of people transforming this region. Many of these groups believed they were improving their community and its use of nature, even as they reversed their predecessors' efforts. First, native peoples expanded the tallgrass prairies, then early farmers plowed up those prairie lands, and later industrialists and suburban developers built where farms once stood. Assertions that these transformations represented progress, however, have been called into question in recent decades because of increased understanding of ecology and, later, of growing awareness of environmental justice, sustainability, and climate change. This trio of emerging concepts points the way to new types of human transformations that can improve built environments and restore natural landscapes by balancing economic prosperity with the health of ecosystems and human communities. People will continue to remake Chicago, but this constant process of urban transformation can yield healthier environmental relationships. To achieve this goal, it is critical to examine the history of the intricate and constantly evolving system of man-made and natural components that

people have woven together to build the city of Chicago on this dramatically altered landscape of lake and prairie.

Chicago residents and visitors to the city each have their own unique understanding and personal map of the complex web of interconnected neighborhoods along the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan. And all of these maps are in motion, as Chicago is in an ongoing process of transformation and reinvention, one that is surpassed by few American cities. Longtime residents have multiple layers to their understanding of Chicago's urban geography, with memories of the built environments of their early years lying beneath a contemporary map that accounts for urban redevelopment. Historians and geographers possess an ability to dig deeper into the city's past, researching and writing about the ways that previous generations reshaped the urban environment, and revealing broad patterns such as industrial booms, transportation shifts, or one immigrant group replacing another. Chicago has been reconfigured by American migrants moving west, by ongoing waves of European immigrants, by African Americans migrating from the rural South to the urban North, and by more recent newcomers from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Each group fought to make a place for itself, providing labor and ideas to fuel the city's economy, creating new communities and businesses, and reshaping neighborhoods. Today's Chicago is the result of the struggles and contributions of countless men and women, and the city's environmental history is a complex story of a landscape transformed by its people.[1]

Visitors and newcomers to Chicago soon become familiar with a few neighborhoods, but most have difficulty creating their own maps that reflect the complexity of this sprawling city. Outsiders typically start not with a micro-level understanding that emerges from childhood, but instead with a macro-level perspective that is less detailed but can show how Chicago differs from other cities. For the first-time visitor flying into O'Hare or Midway airports, the view from an airplane window is arresting—the topography is as flat as a table, with a cluster of skyscrapers rising from the lakeshore, and development radiating across the landscape. Especially at night, with the lake in darkness and streets lit up, the traveler looks down on a built environment that appears to be a perfect Cartesian grid, with straight lines extending north, south, and west, as regular as graph paper. Immigrant communities cannot be identified, and lines drawn onto the landscape by ethnicity, religion, class, and race are not visible. This flat plane can be viewed as a blank slate, a vast canvas on which to plan, build, and then rebuild a city. In the nineteenth century boosters such as land speculator Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard and first Chicago mayor William Butler Ogden inscribed canals, railroads,

and industrial facilities onto the prairies and wetlands, and twentieth-century city planners and political leaders such as the architect Daniel Burnham and Mayors Richard J. and Richard M. Daley sketched out new visions for the booming metropolitan region. For better and for worse, a myriad other Chicagoans have also left their marks on the constantly evolving urban landscape.

This collection of essays is an examination of the environmental history of Chicago by a diverse group of scholars trained in history, geography, and other disciplines. The book's contributors include Chicago residents who were born here, native daughters and sons who have moved out of the region, and recent arrivals who are analyzing their adopted home. Our shared goal is to research and narrate stories about the physical transformations that have occurred in one of the nation's most influential cities across its history, with an emphasis on reciprocal relationships as people have altered nature and the natural world has shaped the city. Some of us teach courses on Chicago history and were trained in urban history, a field with deep roots in local universities, while others identify first with the newer field of environmental history. We believe more conversation between urban and environmental historians, geographers, and other scholars will benefit our shared understanding of Chicago's past, present, and future.

This book is a new contribution to the fast-growing subfield of urban-environmental history, and it is the latest release in the History of the Urban Environment series published by the University of Pittsburgh Press. Starting with Craig Colten's 2000 book *Transforming New Orleans and Its Environs*, this series has published books edited by leading environmental historians and geographers such as Colten, Joel Tarr, Martin Melosi, and Char Miller that offer path-breaking examinations of the complex interconnections between people and nature in cities.[2] Those volumes gave readers notable insights into New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Houston, and San Antonio, and more recent additions to the series have offered valuable analysis of Los Angeles, Phoenix, Boston, Philadelphia, and Sacramento.[3] While the West, South, and Northeast are well represented, there is no book on a midwestern city, even though Chicago, Detroit, and other Great Lakes cities have had a profound impact on urban America. Many of these books identify a single feature as central to the city's environmental history, such as the energy industry in Houston, the Mexican border in San Antonio, sunshine in Los Angeles, and the limited water in Phoenix. But Chicago's story is more varied and fluid than Pittsburgh's long reliance on steel or Houston's continuing links to oil. Chicago's constant process of evolution and reinvention closely parallels national economic patterns. The city's ability to remake itself,

as in its shift from Rust Belt decline to postindustrial prosperity, makes Chicago difficult to label but also suggests it can function as a microcosm of urban-environmental changes and offer insights relevant to a large number of American cities.

This series has long lacked a volume on Chicago, due in part to the city's size and complexity, but also because the seminal book combining environmental and urban history was a study of Chicago—William Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. Cronon's fascinating and authoritative book, published in 1991, provided an exciting blueprint for scholars studying a single city's environmental relationships. Six years later Andrew Hurley's *Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis*, published before the University of Pittsburgh Press series began, provided a model for a collection of essays on a single city that examined the creation of place over time from multiple perspectives.[4]

Nature's Metropolis forced readers to see cities as built on and within nature, not separate from it, and made scholars rethink their understandings of linkages between cities and their hinterlands. Cronon explains in his introduction that as a child going through Chicago on car trips to rural Wisconsin, he viewed the city as an outsider and was deeply uncomfortable with its industry and pollution. As an adult, however, he realized "that the urban and rural landscapes I have been describing are not two places but one. They created each other."[5] Cronon's remarkable book excels in using an outsider's macro-level view, and the city he depicts can be viewed as an organism that thrives on its ability to pull in resources from its hinterlands. This approach explains how Chicago grew into a great industrial city by processing the grain, meat, and lumber brought in by railroads from the Midwest and West. Cronon's analysis is powerful and persuasive, and shapes the way all of us teach and write about urban and environmental history.

We do not see this edited collection as a corrective to *Nature's Metropolis*, which recently celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, but instead as an opportunity to restart the conversation about Chicago while adding new perspectives and voices. Our book draws more from the model laid out by Andrew Hurley in his edited collection on the creation of place over time in St. Louis. We seek to tell a variety of more narrowly focused stories, examining specific locations and analyzing the roles of different groups and social movements in transforming the city. *Nature's Metropolis* explains the city's rapid nineteenth-century growth, culminating in the 1893 Columbian Exposition, while this volume begins with Native Americans before European settlers arrived, and then analyzes nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century Chicago, including

varied efforts to grapple with the pollution from earlier industrial booms. Cronon structured his study around flows of commodities and capital, which has great explanatory power, but he is the first to admit that it results in a book with few individual people beyond boosters and capitalists. The chapters that follow offer closer analysis of transformations created by everyday Chicagoans, such as African American migrants from the rural South and Mexican American steelworkers.[6] They also tell stories about conservation and environmental restoration efforts in specific places far from the business district, such as Skokie's lagoons, Cook and DuPage Counties' suburbs, and the Calumet region's brownfields.[7]

The physical landscape underlying the built environment might be viewed as a blank slate on which to erect the city of Chicago, but this mixture of land and water is not as uniform as it appears, and knowledge of its natural systems is required to build effectively. While the metropolitan area has only one major body of water and its numerous rivers are quite small, the abundance of freshwater in the region plays a complex and changing role in its environmental history. Lake Michigan has contributed to the region's development in quite different ways as the lake port became an industrial center and then a postindustrial city.[8] The region's low elevation alongside Lake Michigan and its high water table resulted in a diverse natural landscape of tallgrass prairie, islands of oak savanna, wetlands, and dunes. This subtle but richly varied patchwork of ecosystems has been altered and remade by humans over and over, dating back to precolonial Indians whose interventions encouraged the expansion of the tallgrass prairie.[9] Multiple authors in this volume examine efforts to remake wetlands, joining conversations in environmental histories such as *Discovering the Unknown Landscape* by Ann Vileisis, *An Unnatural Metropolis* by Craig Colten, and *The Fall and Rise of the Wetlands of California's Great Central Valley* by Philip Garone.[10]

This location at the meeting of lake and prairie offered commercial opportunities because of its geographic advantages—advantages that the region's Native Americans long recognized. The site stood at the juncture of two of North America's principal watersheds. The Chicago River and other smaller streams drained into the Great Lakes hydrological system. Holding nearly twenty percent of Earth's freshwater, the Great Lakes provided access to the Atlantic Ocean via portages and the St. Lawrence River.[11] Other Chicago-area rivers, including the Des Plaines, flows into the Illinois River, which is part of the Mississippi River drainage. The Mississippi stretches 2,300 miles from its Minnesota headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico, and, with its tributaries, drains more than forty percent of the contiguous United States.[12] Native Americans portaged the short distance across the low-lying divides that separated the watersheds in

dry seasons, and the traverse was even easier when floodwaters covered the higher areas. The linkage between these two watersheds generated a fertile trading ground connecting peoples across broad stretches of land and water. Indians lived on the Chicago River's banks for centuries, and the arrival of Europeans in the late seventeenth century expanded the regional fur trade and led to a métis settlement that existed through the early nineteenth century.[13]

Efforts to control the region's water, whether for canal transportation, industrial use, waste removal, recreational purposes, or flood prevention, are a major theme in Chicago's environmental history. The tallgrass prairie landscape was unattractive to nineteenth-century settlers until they developed the ability to plow the land. Then farmers poured in for the rich soils and abundant water, and the region's agricultural economy boomed alongside the city's commerce and industry. Connecting the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River by canal was a critical step in using engineering to improve upon the region's water systems. As industries such as meatpacking used and polluted enormous quantities of water, the reversal of the flow of the Chicago River to protect residents' health became one of the most notable environmental interventions in American urban history.[14] By the twentieth century little tallgrass prairie was left, and scientists and conservationists, including Henry Chandler Cowles, Jens Jensen, and May Watts, wrote about the beauty of vanishing midwestern ecosystems and called to protect them from urban development and suburban sprawl.[15] These reformers believed access to green space such as prairies would improve the well-being of Chicagoans. In examining links between health and environment, our contributors are in dialogue with recent environmental works ranging from *The Health of the Country* by Conevery Bolton Valencius and *Inescapable Ecologies* by Linda Nash to *Toxic Bodies* by Nancy Langston and *On Immunity* by Eula Biss.[16]

This book's title, *City of Lake and Prairie*, highlights the fact that Chicago sits on a strategic location in the middle of the continent astride two crucial ecosystems in the Midwest. It developed at the western edge of the Great Lakes, on the prairies that begin near the Illinois-Indiana border and stretch across the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. The people of Chicago have altered their environmental relationships many times, but over and over their city has functioned as a point of connection linking distant communities and environmental systems. In the early days of European settlement, it was a fur-trading entrepôt, and water routes traveled by canoes and ships linked native peoples hunting in North American landscapes to European markets. In the canal era Chicago's Illinois and Michigan Canal joined the Great Lakes and the

Mississippi River, and canal boats and ships connected Illinois farmers with New York markets. Railroads extended Chicago's reach to the Far West, making it the crucial hub between the nation's Atlantic and Pacific seaports. Chicago's agricultural processing businesses and its vast industrial facilities pulled in crops, livestock, lumber, metals, fossil fuels, and other commodities from national and international locations. Today Chicago's new postindustrial businesses and service economy continue to make advantageous use of this mid-continent location.

The city of lake and prairie has maintained its position as the nation's second or third largest urban area since 1890, adapting to broad economic patterns and new technologies so continuously that it can be seen as a microcosm of urban America's key shifts from the late nineteenth century to today. Chicago is now the most diversified economy in the nation, according to World Business Chicago, and its economic mix most closely represents the U.S. economy as a whole. Only New York City is the headquarters of more Fortune 500 corporations, and the Chicago region's economy is large enough that it compares favorably with leading global economic hubs.[17] The Chicago metropolitan area continues to generate great wealth, but it also remains the site of alarming economic inequality, as prosperous green suburbs and revitalized downtown neighborhoods lie a short distance from districts of persistent poverty that lack access to adequate jobs, housing, safe streets, stores with healthy food, and green space. The political troubles in the city and the state, particularly the problems of underfunded pensions and government corruption, impede progress on these troubling economic and environmental disparities. Thus Chicago continues to be an international example of America's business successes and its social justice failures. Solid environmental histories of urban centers outside the United States have been published recently, such as *London: Water and the Making of the Modern City* by John Broich and *Metropolitan Natures: Environmental Histories of Montreal* edited by Stéphane Castonguay and Michèle Dagenais, and our book seeks to engage with these international urban-environmental case studies.[18]

While the city's flat physical landscape and its businesses are surprisingly varied, the fundamental economic philosophy of Chicago's farmers, merchants, industrialists, and commodities traders has been more unified than might be expected. Capitalism is the central principle, leading to a drive to control and impose order on the natural world. Strenuous efforts to increase agricultural and industrial production and efficiency have defined the city's growth, and these business practices have etched inequality into the urban landscape. The broad patterns that emerged in the nineteenth century and carried through

the twentieth century include constant economic innovation, a series of important shifts in transportation technology, significant environmental damage, and dramatic cycles of economic growth and decline. Carl Sandburg's 1914 poem "Chicago" depicts a brutal but vibrant and proud city based on blue-collar pursuits such as railroads, meat, and wheat. Similarly Nelson Algren's 1951 *Chicago: City on the Make* captures the mix of vitality and greed that defined the city in the Cold War years and continued to yield great wealth and abject poverty.[19] Chicago began as a shipping center and benefited from river and canal transportation, but truly took off as a railroad and telegraph hub, and now is defined by interstate highways, air travel, and data networks. The city has seen a series of great economic booms, with an early focus on meatpacking and agricultural processing, followed by manufacturing of agricultural machinery, steel, and electrical equipment by corporations from McCormick to Western Electric.[20] Real estate, retail empires such as Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward, and printing companies like R. R. Donnelley and Rand McNally have stretched across multiple eras, while in recent decades service economies such as financial services, information technology, and tourism have surpassed manufacturing.[21] Our authors are in dialogue with other recent environmental histories that critically examine modern American capitalism, including Andrew Needham's *Power Lines*, Christopher Jones's *Routes of Power*, and Ted Steinberg's *Down to Earth*.[22]

These cycles of industrial expansion regularly remade Chicago's urban geography, with the booms creating successful commercial and residential districts and huge industrial facilities, and the ensuing downturns yielding bleak areas of poverty. The downtown business district has been the site of remarkable architectural advances, as Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and others influenced urban design around the world. Huge facilities such as the Union Stock Yard, Pullman, U.S. Steel, and Western Electric were sources of blue-collar jobs, civic pride, and wealth, but Chicago's manufacturing decline eventually shuttered all these industrial sites, even as Houston and Detroit continued to process petroleum and make cars. Chicago's neighborhoods have always included distinct landscapes of wealth and poverty, with fashionable elite enclaves such as the Gold Coast as well as neighborhoods full of poor immigrants and African Americans such as Back of the Yards, Bronzeville, Lawndale, and Little Village. Many important industrial sites have been nearly erased from the landscape, and so have infamous areas of poverty such us the demolished Cabrini-Green and Robert Taylor Homes.[23] Newcomers to Chicago have never seen those high-rise public housing projects, and students already view them as bleak but hazy

stories from a past almost as distant as Jane Addams's Hull House, Upton Sinclair's Back of the Yards, and the rigidly segregated Bronzeville. This volume's close examinations of Chicago's complex, layered landscapes seek to connect with other environmental histories chronicling the battles that shape urban environments, including Michael Rawson's *Eden on the Charles*, Catherine McNeur's *Taming Manhattan*, Matthew Klingle's *Emerald City,* and Christopher Wells's *Car Country.*[24]

How Chicago's working classes adapted to the city's challenging urban environment is another key theme in this volume. Waves of immigrants from every continent, as well as internal migrants from America's rural South, provided much of the labor for the industrial metropolis. These varied immigrants did not draw up the blueprints, but they performed the work that reshaped nature into city. Blue-collar workers embodied Chicago, which Carl Sandburg called the "City of the Broad Shoulders," and they built its urban infrastructure by digging canals, paving streets, forging steel, and erecting skyscrapers. The urban poor had a more intimate and intense relationship with nature than the wealthy, being more likely to endure heat and cold, and to live and work close to animals in the slaughterhouses and in poor neighborhoods.[25] The city's working-class residents were also more likely to die of cholera and other diseases linked to a lack of clean water, and to be killed in workplace accidents.[26] The living conditions in densely packed neighborhoods, the varied foods that immigrants ate, and the ways they structured their free time, including seeking recreation in urban green spaces, are all important pieces of Chicago's environmental past. In examining the environmental experiences and struggles of working-class urban residents, particularly in Part III of this volume, our authors seek to engage with other environmental histories that focus on labor and class, including *Killing for Coal* by Thomas Andrews and *Making a Living* by Chad Montrie.[27]

Chicago's growth into an industrial giant with high levels of inequality led to a wide variety of reform efforts from the Gilded Age and Progressive Era forward. Early pressure for change came from grassroots activism by the working classes, including labor unions and anarchist groups.[28] Middle-class and wealthy residents also organized to address economic, social, and environmental problems in the early twentieth century, and Hull House and the University of Chicago were key hubs for these reform efforts. Since Daniel Burnham's 1909 *Plan of Chicago*, urban planners have laid out large-scale responses to the challenges facing the Midwest's greatest industrial city.[29] The Great Depression provided new opportunities for reform and conservation, with New Deal agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps planting trees and draining wetlands to create Cook County's Forest Preserves.[30]

Meanwhile, Chicago's heavy industries continued to create widespread and intense air and water pollution, and the booming city generated huge quantities of solid waste.[31] The flat and watery landscape of the expanding metropolitan area complicated the city's sanitation efforts from its beginnings and continued to be used as a sink for a range of waste products, from the Calumet region's steel industry to suburban landfills.[32] In the decades after World War II, cities around the Great Lakes grappled with deindustrialization as the region became known as the Rust Belt. The industrial giant that had emerged in the mid-nineteenth century faced great challenges in the mid-twentieth, and the city's population declined due to the loss of industrial jobs and "white flight" to the suburbs. During the 1960s and 1970s, in the era of Rachel Carson and Earth Day, the intensity of the response to environmental problems grew in the region and across the nation. Grassroots activists included women and men, from students to retirees, in both urban and suburban neighborhoods; and notable nonprofit groups such as Businessmen for the Public Interest and OpenLands emerged in Chicago.[33] This volume seeks to engage with works on twentieth-century environmental reform, including Neil Maher's *Nature's New Deal*, Dorceta Taylor's *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement*, and Robert Gottlieb's *Forcing the Spring*.[34]

Chicago has made a more successful transition from manufacturing center to postindustrial city than many of its Rust Belt neighbors, and its complex story of reinvention continues to unfold. In the past several decades environmental cleanup and restoration projects have made progress in a range of neighborhoods, but a huge array of problem areas continues to dot the metropolitan landscape. Three new ways of understanding the fundamental relationships between Chicagoans and nature in the twenty-first century have emerged, with the first being a rising awareness of environmental inequality. The core idea in environmental justice, as scholars such as Robert Bullard and Sylvia Hood Washington have explained, is that the poor and people of color are exposed to environmental risks such as polluted air and water, unsafe working conditions, substandard housing, and lack of waste removal at far higher rates than middle-class or white Chicagoans.[35] This legacy has sparked grassroots efforts among African Americans and Mexican Americans to improve environmental conditions and seek social justice in Chicago.[36]

A second new concept is the idea of sustainability, and in recent years political and business leaders, including Mayors Richard M. Daley and Rahm Emanuel, have worked to make Chicago a "greener" city while promoting it as a destination for visitors. Millennium Park, which is built over rail yards and is one of the world's largest rooftop gardens, is an ex-

cellent example of a new public landscape highlighting urban renewal and sustainability for a city based more on tourism than industry.[37] Recent efforts to improve energy efficiency, water use, and recycling and to promote economic development and green space have come from political and business leaders in addition to grassroots activists. On one hand, Millennium Park and the planned Barack Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park on the city's South Side build upon a legacy dating back to the 1893 Columbian Exposition in which public spaces such as the Museum of Science and Industry and the Field Museum are sited near the lakefront. But these two projects, together costing about $1 billion, with funding from a new group of philanthropists such as the Pritzker and Crown families, also represent a new era of urban design based on sustainability principles that projects a new image of Chicago to visitors. Such ongoing efforts to engineer a "greener" Chicago seek to realign the city with its 1830s motto, *Urbs in Horto* or "City in a Garden."[38]

A third recent idea, with links to environmental justice and sustainability, is a growing acknowledgment that climate change has the potential to profoundly alter relations with nature in the metropolitan area in the twenty-first century. The vast store of freshwater in Lake Michigan is an asset with increasing value, and the Chicago River is dramatically cleaner today, but the region's abundant water also has liabilities. The likelihood of increasingly intense rains due to climate change creates major challenges for the highly developed and flood-prone region.[39] So far, Chicago has escaped the devastation from flooding seen in New Orleans and Houston, although heavy rains caused widespread flooding in April 2013 when the Chicago River was diverted into Lake Michigan for the first time in over a century. Chicagoland's flood risk calls for new interventions, as the flat landscape of prairies and wetlands that once absorbed excess rain is now a patchwork of urban areas with increasingly impermeable roads, parking lots, commercial developments, and suburban sprawl. The Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, also called Deep Tunnel, is a massive water management system of underground tunnels and reservoirs to be completed in 2029, but this multi-billion-dollar project will not be able to handle rains such as Houston experienced in 2017 during Hurricane Harvey.[40]

For nearly two centuries Chicagoans have erected, demolished, and rebuilt layers of built environment on top of this landscape of prairies, wetlands, and dunes while also constructing unseen technological systems belowground and underwater.[41] The infamous 1871 Chicago Fire caused a substantial reshaping of the city's landscape, with extensive land-making along the lakeshore, but the capitalist imperative won out over more far-reaching environmental reforms.[42] The recovery from

the fire followed on the heels of the massive grade-raising project of the 1850s and 1860s that used jackscrews to raise buildings, sidewalks, and streets out of the lakefront's mud. The city of Chicago that flourished in the century after the fire reshaped built environments across the nation by exporting new architectural styles and innovative urban planning ideas, including the Chicago School of architecture and the City Beautiful Movement. Less visible interventions into nature include the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant and the Jardine Water Purification Plant, which are among the world's largest wastewater facilities and water filtration facilities. Together these plants serve several million people in the city of Chicago and in scores of suburban communities, uniting a huge metropolitan region with ignored but crucial environmental infrastructure.

Twenty-first century efforts to address environmental justice, sustainability, and climate change goals have great potential but they require a deep understanding of the complex layers of Chicago's environmental history. Generations of Chicagoans have profoundly altered the landscape of prairies and wetlands along the lakefront, and these changes will continue. The city's stunning industrial growth in the late nineteenth century transformed the region, creating vast environmental problems that reformers and urban planners in the Progressive Era were able to lessen but not solve. Subsequent generations have continued this pattern, focusing on the primary goal of growing the city's economy and expanding its built environment and transportation systems, with a distinctly secondary goal of ameliorating damage to the natural world and to human health. Fifty years ago an emerging understanding of ecology led more Chicagoans to question that status quo. Skepticism about the long-accepted definition of progress has increased in the new millennium due to a growing awareness of environmental justice, sustainability, and climate change. These important concepts offer a road map to new types of urban transformation and landscape restoration that prioritize improving the health of ecosystems and human communities. This book tells an array of deeply researched stories about how people have reshaped the landscape of Chicago to help us understand the road traveled to this point. The next chapter of the environmental history of the city of lake and prairie has yet to be written.