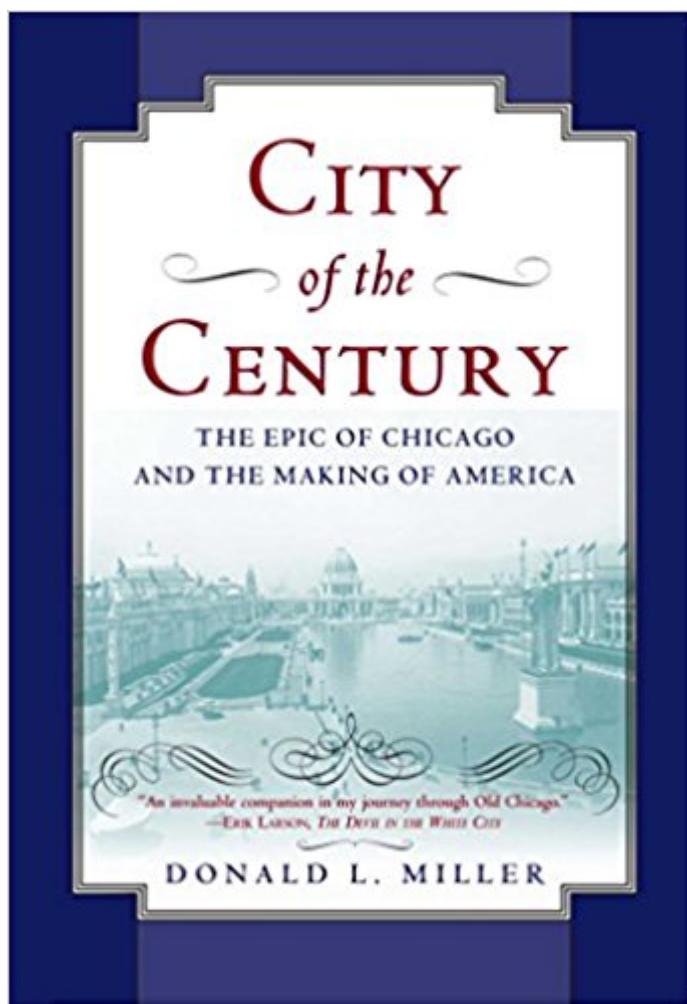


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# City Of The Century: The Epic Of Chicago And The Making Of America



## Synopsis

The epic of Chicago is the story of the emergence of modern America. Here, witness Chicago's growth from a desolate fur-trading post in the 1830s to one of the world's most explosively alive cities by 1900. Donald Miller's powerful narrative embraces it all: Chicago's wild beginnings, its reckless growth, its natural calamities (especially the Great Fire of 1871), its raucous politics, its empire-building businessmen, its world-transforming architecture, its rich mix of cultures, its community of young writers and journalists, and its staggering engineering projects— which included the reversal of the Chicago River and raising the entire city from prairie mud to save it from devastating cholera epidemics. The saga of Chicago's unresolved struggle between order and freedom, growth and control, capitalism and community, remains instructive for our time, as we seek ways to build and maintain cities that retain their humanity without losing their energy. City of the Century throbs with the pulse of the great city it brilliantly brings to life.

## Book Information

Series: Illinois

Paperback: 704 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster; Reprint edition (April 3, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0684831384

ISBN-13: 978-0684831381

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 59 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #72,930 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional U.S. > Midwest #829 in Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local #884 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > United States

## Customer Reviews

A desolate fur-trading outpost in 1830, Chicago became, within half a century, the nation's railroad hub, livestock and packing center and a manufacturing giant. A glorious anthem to a tumultuous city, this synthesis of industrial, social and cultural history captures the raw, robust spirit of Chicago on every page. Miller, a history professor at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania, peoples his big, colorful, engrossing canvas with architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan, railroad entrepreneur George Pullman, settlement-house workers Jane Addams and Florence Kelley, "Meat

king" Philip Armour, dry-goods merchant Marshall Field, retailers Richard Sears and Alvah Roebuck, reaper inventor Cyrus McCormick, mail-order pioneer Aaron Montgomery Ward, Theodore Dreiser, Lincoln Steffens and others. Chicago-with its experience of mass transit, a regimented workforce, instant suburbs, the Americanization of diverse immigrant groups and battles between privatism and the public good-serves as a prism through which we watch the emergence of modern American life. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

No other American city experienced the growth and development, destructive natural disaster, and rebirth that Chicago did in the 19th century. The Great Fire of 1871 was potentially the end of the largest city in America's heartland, but by 1893 Chicago had rebuilt and hosted the World's Columbian Exposition. The story of that growth, loss, and reemergence is remarkable, and historian Miller (Lewis Mumford: A Life, LJ 6/1/89) has written an equally remarkable story of Chicago, what he terms an industrial history. Miller carefully develops the saga of Chicago's growth, despair, and recovery in an extraordinary text that is readable yet scholarly. In his narrative Miller tells of Chicago's historical and literary figures, reform leaders, architects, industrialists, and entrepreneurs. Several histories of the city have appeared over the years (e.g., Edward Wagenknecht's Chicago, LJ 3/15/64), yet Miller's is a model for future historians. Highly recommended for all libraries. Boyd Childress, Auburn Univ. Lib., Ala. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The author kept his word in that his history of Chicago would be different from most other histories. His theme was economic-based. He focused on the geography, explaining the initial situation of how Chicago started in the location that it did. Then how the people came the obstacles of the location to build the city. Like many cities, there was no overarching plan. The city had problems and plenty of them. But then came the Great Fire, which provided a second chance to make it a better place. This set the stage for the high-rise Chicago we know today. Then in 1893 came the White City showing the world what Chicago had become after the fire and what it could become in the future. A very interesting history that has led me to other books about Chicago. I highly recommend this book.

Donald Miller wrote a masterpiece that belongs in every library. I loved it so much that I read it twice and you can believe it will remain in my personal library as both an entertainment and reference

source. What can I say about Miller other than WOW! City of the Century is a wonderfully written history of the development and trials and tribulations of nineteenth century Chicago. The good - the bad - and the ugly. The story is captivating and I found it hard to put it down. Note: after my 1st read, I bought copies for my brothers and grandchildren and they too love this book. I submit that it should be a MUST read for anyone with an interest in U.S. history since it is a story about nineteenth century Chicago as told through individual stories of Chicago business leaders, politicians and Chicago citizens. You will enjoy how the story unfolds and the influence that Chicago and its people had as the U.S. marched westward taking along the Midwest ideals, values, and attitudes. I can only say that I was NOT sorry that I bought Miller's book. You won't be sorry either!

For a native Chicagoan who knows all these places and streets this is a great book. It is not a travel guide. It is history. I grew up in Indiana and knew some of Chicago's wild past, but this book really gives it perspective. From a swamp that even the Indians didn't want anything to do with to the Columbian Expo of 1893, this book is a romp. Excellent book. Well worth the read. For a great companion piece read "Devil in the White City" by Larsen. That one will have you gasping to turn to the next page.

A very detailed history of Chicago up to the beginning of the 20th century. The author covers every part of the growth of the city, its various movers and shakers, its low life, sleaze bags and upper crust wealthy citizens. In some respects the detail is more than is necessary to get the proper perspective of the events and people who shaped them but the reader can't complain that the subject was not thoroughly covered. I recommend the book to all Chicago residents who call the second city home and are interested in the city's development.

This book put meat on the skeleton history I already had of Chicago, but it would be just as fascinating for someone with only cursory familiarity of the city as well. The characters came alive, and just about every lingering question I had has been answered, all while providing an excellent historical perspective and understanding of the growth of this urban place. All history has to be sliced one way or another, and this really told the story of the city thoroughly and gave it a theme and character, but I would like to have the anecdotes about the colorful figures of this time and place compiled more into their individual stories rather than scattered about the themes of the story of the city. Probably can't have it both ways though, and I found this book to be an excellent read as it stands. Will there be a follow up on modern Chicago? Hope so.

What a great book! This book is super dense, but in the best way possible. You get so much rich, interesting info. Plus it is so well organized with a great flow through time and from topic to topic. Most importantly the author is constantly weaving stories which keeps the book very interesting throughout; never a dull moment. I just was asked to read this book as a first step to becoming a Chicago tour guide, so that's gotta tell you something.

I grew up in Chicago and never knew the whole story. Other than my mother teaching me the song about Mrs. O'Leary's cow, I was ignorant of the history. I was astonished how young the city is and how much was accomplished in a short time. I would like Book 2 to detail the next hundred years.

filled with facts and tales, this book gave a thorough and multi-sided of view of Chicago from the very beginning to the turn of the century. Enjoyable to read and helps to piece together a complex history.

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