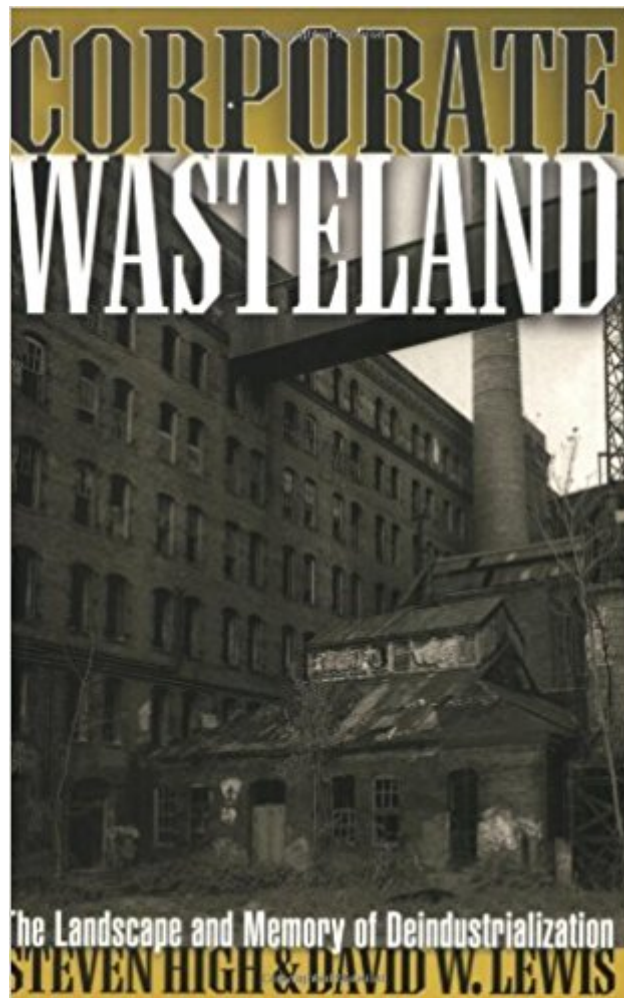




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Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape And Memory Of Deindustrialization



Synopsis

Deindustrialization is not simply an economic process, but a social and cultural one as well. The rusting detritus of our industrial past—the wrecked hulks of factories, abandoned machinery too large to remove, and now-useless infrastructures—has for decades been a part of the North American landscape. In recent years, however, these modern ruins have become cultural attractions, drawing increasing numbers of adventurers, artists, and those curious about a forgotten heritage. Through a unique blend of oral history, photographs, and interpretive essays, *Corporate Wasteland* investigates this fascinating terrain and the phenomenon of its loss and rediscovery. Steven High and David W. Lewis begin by exploring an emerging aesthetic they term the deindustrial sublime, explaining how the ritualized demolition of landmark industrial structures served as dramatic punctuations between changing eras. They then follow the narrative path blazed by urban spelunkers, explorers who infiltrate former industrial sites and then share accounts and images of their exploits in a vibrant online community. And to understand the ways in which geographic and emotional proximity affects how deindustrialization is remembered and represented, High and Lewis focus on Youngstown, Ohio, where residents and former steelworkers still live amid the reminders of more prosperous times. *Corporate Wasteland* concludes with photo essays of sites in Michigan, Ontario, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania that pair haunting images with the poignant testimonies of those who remember industrial sites as workplaces rather than monuments. Forcing readers to look beyond nostalgia, High and Lewis reinterpret our deindustrialized landscape as a historical and imaginative challenge to the ways in which we comprehend and respond to the profound disruptions wrought by globalization.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: ILR Press; 1 edition (November 29, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801474019

ISBN-13: 978-0801474019

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.5 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #658,546 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 in Books > Business & Money > Economics > Unemployment #137 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics &

Customer Reviews

"Corporate Wasteland is more than simply the best book on deindustrialization; it's a transnational road trip through the rust belt with everyone from Woody Guthrie to Walker Evans, Joseph Schumpeter to John Steinbeck along for the ride, pointing out the details, arguing about what happened, and digging into the rich complexity of truth itself. The transcendent photographs of rotting industrial hulks and the elegiac words of the workers sear with the intensity of the once red-hot blast furnaces, now long grown cold. This book is not a lament—it is an interrogation of the entire landscape."—Jefferson Cowie, Cornell University, author of *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor*

"For the visitor, abandoned structures articulate in hushed eloquence how a town actually can have a broken heart? Corporate Wasteland is an exceptionally thoughtful treatment that reaffirms the malignant beauty and dignified legacy of these structures and communities."—Mayor John K. Fetterman, Braddock, Pennsylvania

Steven High is Canada Research Chair in Public History at Concordia University in Montreal. He is the author of *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984*. David W. Lewis is a photographer and the author of *The Art of Bromoil and Transfer* and *The Passion Pit: A Tribute to the Drive-in*.

An excellent book, well written and researched, it discusses an area of concern to many industrialised countries, the closing of factories and attendant loss of jobs. It also discusses the loss of working culture and the impact that this has on the lives of those affected. It has many parallels with my own research into the closure of industrial factories in Australia. I was particularly interested to read of the role the Canadian government took in taking over some factories abandoned by American owners — a welcome reversal of the trend to privatisation that has not yet happened in Australia, New Zealand or Britain. The book contains some emotive photographs of the corporate wasteland, but unfortunately, these are of rather poor quality.

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