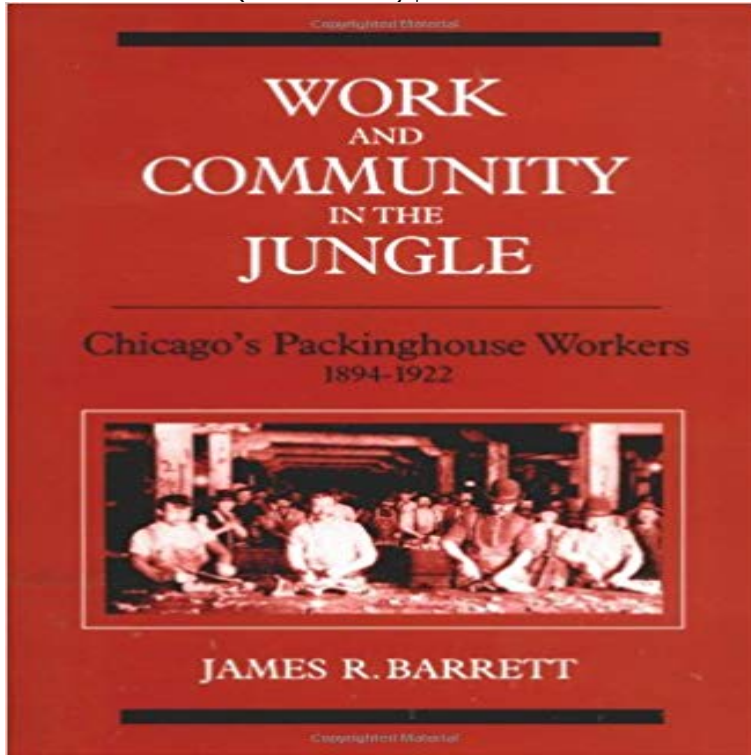


Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicagos Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922 (Working Class in American History)



Chicagos packinghouse workers were not the hopeless creatures depicted by Upton Sinclair in *The Jungle*, but active agents in the early twentieth century transformation that swept urban industrial America. In his case study of Chicagos Union Stockyards, Barrett focuses on the workers - older skilled immigrants, new immigrant common laborers, migrant blacks, and young women workers - and the surrounding neighborhoods. The lives and communities of these workers accurately convey the experience of mass-production work, the quality of working-class life, the process of class formation and fragmentation, and the changing character of class relations. Because Packingtowns struggle for existence was linked directly to the character of work and employment in the industry, unionization played an important role in the lives of these workers. Although unionization was associated with both improving the quality of life and creating a viable community, workers were divided by race, ethnic identity, and skill. *Work and Community in the Jungle* discusses a wide range of social, economic, and cultural factors that resulted in class cohesion and fragmentation. Addressing the broader problem of relations between capital and labor, Barrett demonstrates the effects of government intervention on labor organization, negotiation, and conflict. Shop-floor workers banded together to develop new strategies and forms of organization in their struggle with management for control. Barrett employs contemporary social surveys and a computer-assisted analysis of census data to illustrate the physical and social characteristics of the workers environment. He analyzes this data in the context of the relationships between community, ethnicity, family, work experience, and industrial characteristics.

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