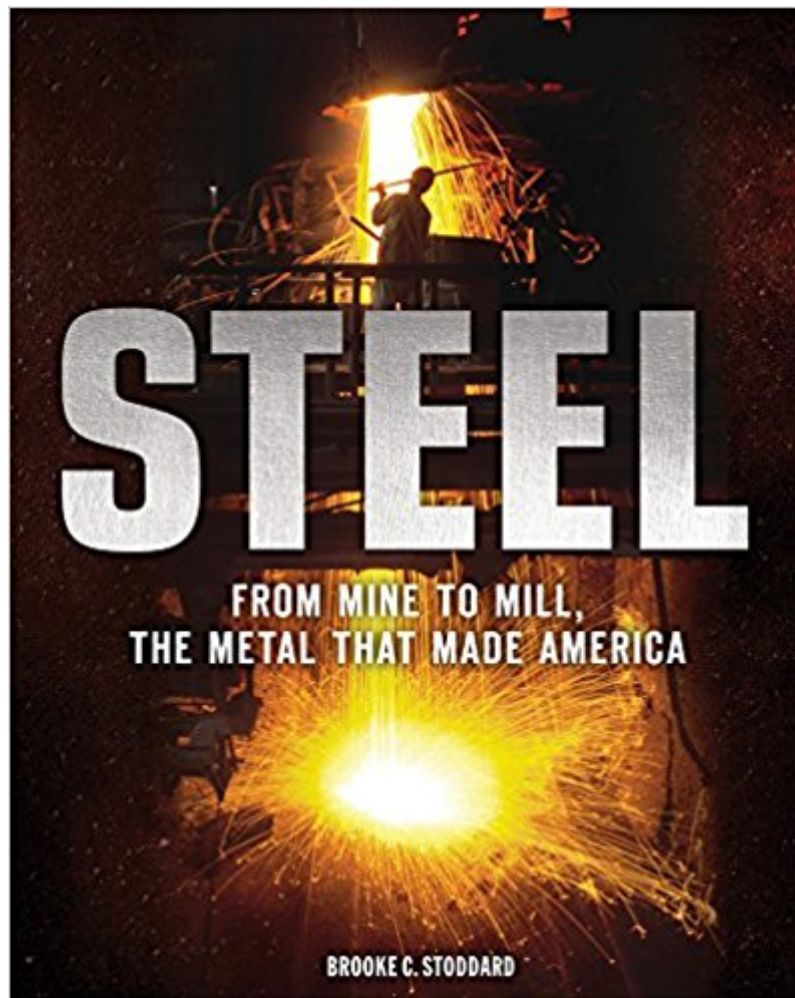




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# Steel: From Mine To Mill, The Metal That Made America



## Synopsis

Steel provides the backbone for modern civilization - read all about its history, journey, and place in the world. What is steel? How does it work? Why has it been so important? Who are the people who make it? How do they make it? Steel: From Mine to Mill, the Metal that Made America answers these questions. Improperly understood until about 150 years ago and available until then only in small quantities, the metal itself is a delicate dance of iron crystals interspersed with carbon and - depending on intended service - other elements such as nickel, chromium, and molybdenum. Once deciphered, steel began to flow from hearths in increasing amounts for the building of railroads, steel ships, skyscrapers, and bridges, in the process raising to world economic dominance Great Britain, Germany, the United States, Japan, and the Soviet Union. The world's current largest producer is China. While researching this book, author Brooke C. Stoddard descended into Mesabi Iron Range open-pit iron mines, rode with 58,000 tons of iron ore on a 1,000-foot ore boat from Duluth to Cleveland, climbed to the top of the hemisphere's largest blast furnace, interviewed men as they toiled next to their furnaces of liquid steel, and walked the immense rolling mills where steel is pressed into finished products. Along the way, he wrote a narrative of iron and steel from pre-history through the Industrial Revolution and into the present age. Steel is the sinew of modern civilization.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Stoddard writes vividly about the history of steel from antiquity to the 21st century, there are dozens of spectacular photographs, and he profiles a score of the tough, knowledgeable men who worked on

Great Lakes ore boats and at Baltimore's famous Sparrows Point steelworks. His fine book honors the American industry that once symbolized this nation's strength and glory - Washington Post"Offering a satisfying mixture of history, science, and technology, Steel is a worthy book, and its up-close and-gritty look at this indispensable building block of modernity is sure to be appealing - Civil Engineering"Brooke C. Stoddard has written an exceptional book that highlights the captivating history of steel and its use to create industries, generate wealth, and build nations. STEEL - From Mine to Mill, the Metal that made America is a fascinating and riveting read - Structure Magazine"The story in "Steel" is that what goes up, must come down. Steel is permanent. Paper fortunes come and go - MinnesotaBrown.com"Read this fascinating story of iron and steel from pre-history through the Industrial Revolution and into the present age. Combining historical research with engaging firsthand reporting, this book dives into the world of modern steelmaking - New Equipment Digest"Mr. Stoddard's narrative ventures into the mills and the ships and beside the workers. Combined with the historical and modern contexts for steel, the result is a deep dive that remains accessible and relatable to the casual reader. It humanizes the subject." - GW Magazine

Brooke C. Stoddard is the author of *World in the Balance: The Perilous Months of June-October 1940* (Potomac, 2011). He is a lifelong professional writer. He worked as a writer and editor at Time-Life Books from 1977 to 1983 and as a book project manager at National Geographic from 2007 to 2009. Between and since, he has worked independently writing stories for the Washington Post, Smithsonian magazine's website, Historic Preservation, and many other periodicals. Some of his more technology and manufacturing stories have appeared in *Electric Perspectives*, *American Gas*, *Chemical Process Safety Report*, McGraw-Hill's *Federal Technology Report*, and *Cutting Tool Engineering*. He is the former editor of *Military Heritage* magazine.

I am a sucker for anything manufacturing related and the books like *Cod*, *The Prize: the Quest for Oil and Salt*. I am pre-disposed to love a book like this. I expected this to weave in the history and impact industries had on steel manufacturing and the impact of the availability of steel to industry. It could have also talked about steel's impact on society both in products and the environment. While it did some of this, it seemed to be far too much about the author's visits to steel plants and mining. It was OK, but it seemed like the book could have been half as long to cover the material. To be fair, I am a hard core mechanical engineer and lover of industrial history. That said, I would not recommend this book.

Excellent research and fine storytelling. Stoddard's book is packed with history and technical information presented in an understandable way. He makes the stories and the people real. This book was clearly a labor of love, and the meticulous gathering of facts and lore make it fascinating to history buffs, students of industry and Great Lakes enthusiasts alike.

I expected and hoped for a layman's description of the esoteric world of how steel is made with some sort of understandable explanation of processes and differences in them and the result of them, instead I got a high school paper of 'what I did last summer'. The intricacies were simply presented indicating the author was as baffled by them as I was, then a long drawn out first person tour of a steel mill and a ride on an ore boat in great detail about each member of the crew, their physical description and even their car, an obvious effort to stretch a story out.

A wonderful story of how a British Colony, forbidden by its mother country to build new competing ironworks, grew to outperform its parent by a ratio of 90 to 16 million tons of steel in the peak production year of WW2. Stoddard traces the story of the American Dream applied big time to the ascendancy of American steel to number one in the 20th Century. He then traces the fall of our mighty steel business from first to fourth place worldwide. A sad tale of warnings seen and ignored: of failure to recognize a need to change; of management and labor trying to out score each other; of declining product quality; of over capacity; of lack of investment in facilities and innovation; of government's lack of action to curb import of heavily subsidized foreign steel; of unfriendly tax depreciation laws. This is a beautifully written and designed book with outstanding illustrations.

It's non-fiction, yet is as easy to read and follow as a novel. The writer did an incredible amount of research and you get the results in easy to swallow doses throughout the book. The author gives you a brief history of steelmaking, then takes you on a journey from the mines through the steel mill to the finished product. It is very well-written and gives you an "up close and personal" look at the techniques and people who make steel. Full Disclosure - I worked as a contractor for Bethlehem Steel in the mid-1970's, so the historical information brought back lots of memories - both good and bad.

Lots of great detail on the evolution of steel. Even though I had a course on metallurgy and studied materials often over the last few decades (I was a nuclear engineer by profession), I often found myself confused about the timeline. I struggled to sort out how it was that high quality steel swords

existed two thousand years ago, yet most metal objects for hard use were made out of wrought iron until late in the 19th Century. "Steel" puts the progress of steel into context.

Not sure if the book is reliable. According to the book the captain of the Great Lakes ore boat who was interviewed was in his fifties and had served 3 years in the navy in WWII. If the man had lied about his age and entered when he was 16 in 1942 he'd be 50 in 1976. The book was published in 2015. But for the captain's story to be true the trip on the ore ship would have had to occur around 1981 34 years before the book was published. That seems odd.

As someone who once upon a time toiled on the blast furnace line at Gary Works, I found this book technically informed, ideologically balanced, and a pleasure to read. It's well-documented, yet addresses the human side of the rise and fall of the US steel industry. The section on the Minnesota iron mines and the Great Lakes shipping fleet was a special treat.

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