

Chicago Dreaming



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During the late nineteenth century, Chicago's population grew at an astonishing rate, with an estimated growth of 900,000 people between 1860 and 1890. Drawn to the opportunities generated by an expansive economy, hinterland migrants from the rural Midwest flocked to the city, their visions of prosperity creating a thriving modern urban culture. The hopes of these newcomers are the subject of Timothy B. Spears's book *Chicago Dreaming* - the story of Chicago's growth and the transplanted Midwesterners who so decisively shaped the young city's identity. Through innovative readings of Theodore Dreiser, Willa Cather, and Richard Wright, Spears argues that the migratory perspective was crucial to the rise of Chicago's emerging literary culture. In following the paths of several well-known migrants, including Jane Addams, cartoonist John T. McCutcheon, and businessman John Glessner, Spears also shows how the view from the hinterland permeated urban culture and informed the development of key Chicago institutions. Further exploring the notion of dreaming, he brings to light the internal desires that lured Midwestern migrants to the city as well as the nostalgia that led them to dream of the homes they left behind. With this fascinating new take on the rise of

Chicago, Chicago Dreaming blurs the line between country and city to reveal the provincial character of modern urban culture.

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目录:

[Chicago Dreaming_ 下载链接1](#)

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