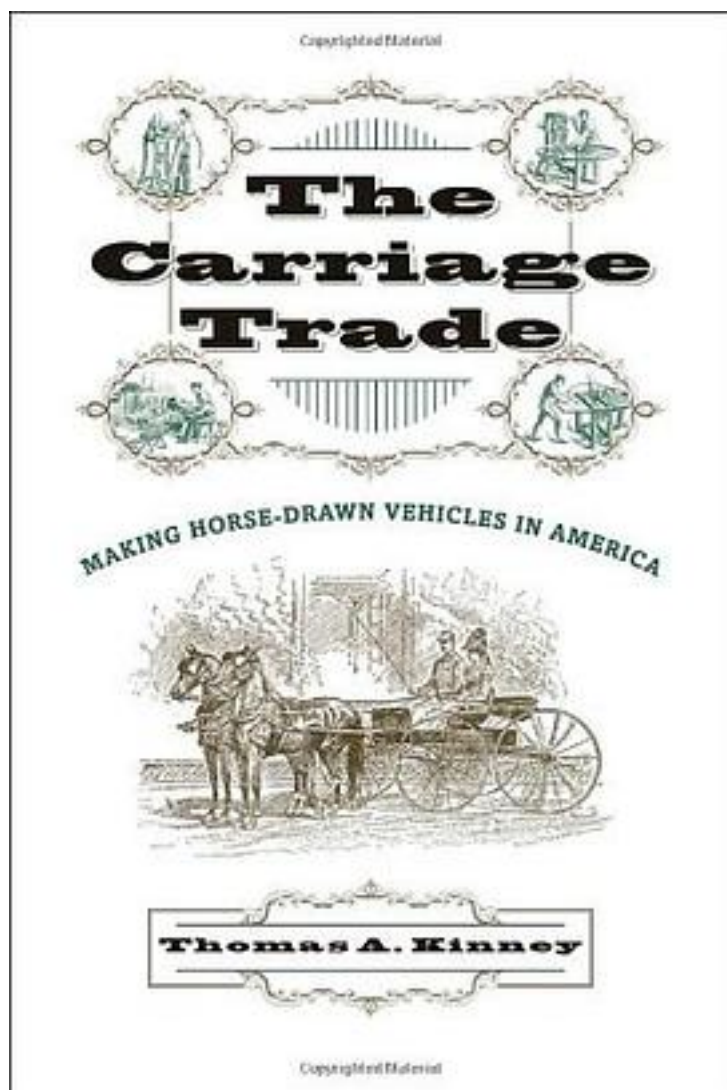# The Carriage Trade

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In 1926, the Carriage Builders' National Association met for the last time, signaling the automobile's final triumph over the horse-drawn carriage. Only a decade earlier, carriages and wagons were still a common sight on every Main Street in America. In the previous century, carriage-building had been one of the largest and most dynamic industries in the country. In this sweeping study of a forgotten trade, Thomas A. Kinney extends our understanding of nineteenth-century American industrialization far beyond the steel mill and railroad. The legendary Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company in 1880 produced a hundred wagons a day-one every six minutes. Across the country, smaller factories fashioned vast quantities of buggies, farm wagons, and luxury carriages. Today, if we think of carriage and wagon at all, we assume it merely foreshadowed the automobile industry. Yet., the carriage industry epitomized a batch-work approach to production that flourished for decades. Contradicting the model of industrial development in which hand tools, small firms, and individual craftsmanship simply gave way to mechanized factories, the carriage industry successfully employed small-scale business and manufacturing practices throughout its history. The Carriage Trade traces the rise and fall of this heterogeneous industry, from the pre-industrial shop system to the coming of the automobile, using as case studies Studebaker, the New York-based luxury carriage-maker Brewsters, and dozens of smallerfirms from around the country. Kinney also explores the experiences of the carriage and wagon worker over the life of the industry. Deeply researched and strikingly original, this study contributes a vivid chapter to the story of America's industrial revolution.

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