How amazing that this very first full-length treatment of the American college town should be as thoroughly satisfying! Blake Gumprecht has given us all we could possibly ask for: a leisurely observed, richly documented, many-sided account of a critically significant part of the American scene, one too long ignored by its scholarly residents. A truly brilliant achievement.

— WILLIAM DELILLY, author of The Cultural Geography of the United States

College towns are a critical piece of America’s changing geography. Blake Gumprecht provides a richly textured account of the growing importance to our economy and society. I can’t imagine a better book on this subject.

— RICHARD WOLFSKI, author of What’s Your City?: How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life

The American College Town demonstrates Gumprecht’s knack for recognizing a great untold story and also proves that it is actually possible to articulate that most elusive of geographical concepts, the sense of place, when the writer is a master of landscape observation, as Gumprecht unperturbably does. This book teaches readers how to use the meaning embedded in places we take for granted. Gumprecht’s exhaustive, multidimensional research enables him to read landscapes better than any historical geographer writing today.

— ANNE KELLY FOWLER, author of Columbus Incorporated

Wichita, Kansas, 1872

Wichita is the largest city in Kansas and the 34th-largest city in the United States. It is the county seat of Sedgwick County and the principal city of the Wichita Metropolitan Area, which includes Butler, Cowley, Harvey, Sumner, and Wilson counties.

Wichita is served by the Wichita Regional Airport, which is the primary airport for the metropolitan area. The airport is located approximately 10 miles southeast of the city center.

In addition to being a major commercial and industrial hub, Wichita is also home to numerous cultural and educational institutions, including the Wichita Art Museum, the Wichita Public Library, and Wichita State University.

With a diverse economy that includes manufacturing, aviation, and healthcare, Wichita has become a dynamic and prosperous city that offers a wide range of opportunities for residents and visitors alike.