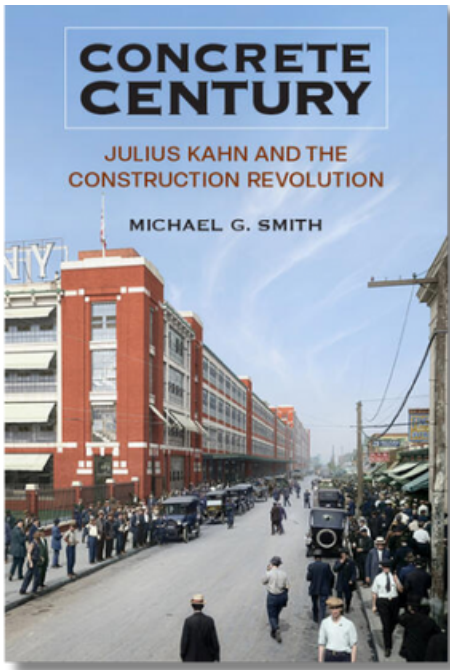




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## CONCRETE CENTURY

Julius Kahn and the Construction Revolution  
By Michael G. Smith

At the turn of the 20th century, industrial manufacturing was expanding dramatically while factory buildings remained fire-prone relics of an earlier age. That is, until a 28-year-old civil engineer finally achieved what engineers around the world had unsuccessfully attempted. Working in his brother's basement in Detroit, Julius Kahn invented the first practical and scientific method of reinforcing concrete with steel bars, which finally made it possible to construct strong, fireproof buildings. After Kahn founded a company in 1903 to manufacture and sell his reinforcement bars, his system of construction became the most widely used throughout the world.

Drawing upon Kahn's personal correspondence, architectural drawings, company records, and contemporary news and journal articles, Michael G. Smith reveals how this man—whose family had immigrated to the US to escape antisemitism in Germany—played an important role in the rise of concrete. Concrete not only turned the tide against widespread destruction of buildings by fire, it also paved the way for our modern economy. *Concrete Century* will delight readers intrigued by architecture and construction technology alike with the true origin story of modern concrete buildings.

**Michael G. Smith** is an architectural historian and the author of *Designing Detroit: Wirt Rowland and the Rise of Modern American Architecture* (Wayne State University Press, 2017).

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