

*Norwood Park, A View from the Ridge* traces the evolution of Norwood Park from open prairie to farmland to subdivision to village to city neighborhood, and reveals the entwined connections between Norwood Park and early Chicago.

Sitting atop Union Ridge, Norwood Park's elevation was key to its settlement. As the site of a Native American signal station, its higher ground provided a vantage point for communicating with native settlements along the North Branch of the Chicago River. Initially accessible only on foot, horseback or canoe, the ridge later attracted settlers looking for dry, fertile soil, timber, and nearby water. As more people learned of the area's resources and beauty, the community grew.

In the 1830s, Native Americans in the Norwood Park area were joined by pioneering newcomers. In 1831, English immigrants Mark and Margaret Noble and family arrived in the primitive, sparsely populated Chicago settlement. Two years later, in 1833, they chose the ridge as the location to build their home, a solitary farmhouse in the prairie.

In 1868, inspired by Frederick Law Olmsted's Picturesque landscape design concepts and Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's idealized New England village, Norwood, the Norwood Land and Building Association acquired several farms. With these, the investors created a residential subdivision eleven miles northwest of downtown Chicago, served by the Chicago and North Western Railway.

The Village of Norwood Park was incorporated in 1874 and annexed to the City of Chicago in 1893.

Although Norwood Park is no longer a country village, its large lots, abundant green space, and unusual, curvilinear street pattern are unique within the City of Chicago. Norwood Park's Picturesque land plan and its architecturally and historically significant buildings have been recognized by both the City of Chicago and the National Register of Historic Places.

*Norwood Park, A View from the Ridge*, with more than 300 illustrations, maps, and photographs, is the first comprehensive history of this distinctive Chicago neighborhood, from its beginnings to the early twentieth century.