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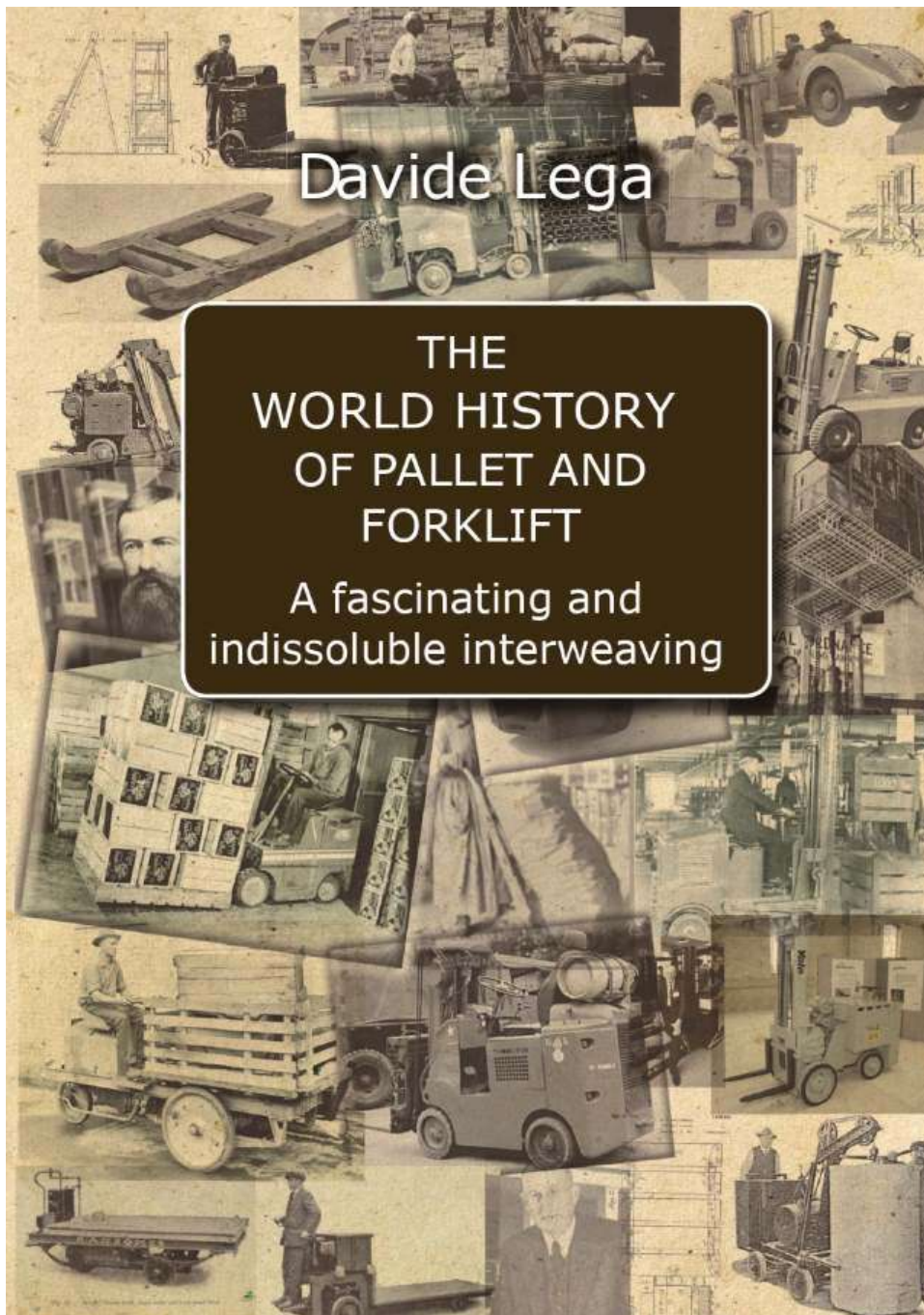
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The World History of Pallet and Forklift: An Interview with Davide Lega

JUNE 26, 2023 BY [RICK LEBLANC](#)



Not a lot of books get published about pallets and forklifts. Italian author and logistics professional Davide Lega now belongs to that exclusive list, recently publishing his new book, *The World History of Pallet and Forklift: A fascinating and indissoluble storyline*.

"This monograph will entice you to explore their fascinating history and their inseparable interweaving within the history surrounding the companies, inventors and events that led the transformation in the development of the forklift and the pallet, starting in the mid-19th century," Lega writes in the Amazon.com description.

"It is a tale full of anecdotes, personalities and previously unknown but intriguing stories that will take you back to the magic and genius of the people and the determination of companies that persevered in the creation of the tools, pallets and forklifts that today move the world of logistics."

I recently reached out to Davide regarding his new release.

1 Tell us about your background and what motivated you to write this book?

DL: I have been a logistics consultant for many years and have managed some production plants. I have always been fascinated by human ingenuity, talent, and natural curiosity. This book is a tribute to all those inventors, entrepreneurs, and technicians who have dedicated their lives to improving our life with the faster transport of raw materials, products, and goods.

2 Who should be interested in reading this book and why? Do logistics professionals care about history?

DL: Surely, yes. Everyone who works in logistics certainly loves to understand where the tools they use daily come from. I was at the logistics fair in Stuttgart, Germany, one month ago and was amazed at how even those who work in automatic logistics (robots, AGV) are fascinated by the book and history.

3 Why was it important to combine these two stories of pallet and forklift? Why not two separate books?

DL: These two tools certainly deserve two separate books, but when you go to study the origins of those histories, you understand that one depends on the other; there can be no forklift without a pallet and vice versa. Moreover, we know very well that some inventors have patented the two tools at the same time, Raymond, the inventor of the double-sided pallet, is a perfect example. He did it in 1936.

4 From your perspective, what are some of the big ideas or major takeaways from the book?

DL: First of all, it is important to understand the context in which these two instruments were born, namely the east coast of the United States with its rapid economic development, the advent of electricity, and certainly of the internal combustion engine. Internal combustion made it possible to develop more powerful machines and, consequently, the need to transport greater volumes and, therefore, to develop storage upwards. However, I believe the essential push was the maximum use of the pallet during the Second World War and the creation of American standard 48 x 40 inches and European 120 x 80 cm.

5 What did your research involve? Was it mainly online?

DL: Part of the research was developed online, but I certainly needed to talk to pallet producers and forklift truck producers to better understand the interaction of the two tools.

During this research, I was able to ascertain that the historical companies of pallets and, above all, forklift trucks have developed thousands of specific patents on the components that deserve to be told in a separate book but whose components are the basis of the final overall invention. An example could be the invention and patent of the forklift counterweight or ball bearings. I have included some of these examples in the book.

6 How did R&D in Europe, the Americas, and Europe interact? Was there a flow of technology between continents, or were these emerging technologies developed mainly in isolation?

DL: Obviously, there are concentration points in the world for developing these two instruments, which are the American east coast, England, and Germany until the early 40s of the last century. In this period, there were certainly commercial exchanges, especially from the United States to Europe. Exchanges brought, for example, the patents of the American YALE. YALE built cranes, hoists, and forklift trucks in France with commercial agreements with the Fenwick company for the first importation and construction, based on Yale patents of forklifts.

In the post-WW2 period then, the advent of standards, international trade, Japanese products, and companies certainly created a mix of collaborations, contaminations, and duplications of similar patents because companies are no longer just national but multinational. In the case of the pallet, this is the period in which CHEP and LOSCAM expand their sphere of influence in the east first and then in the case of CHEP throughout the world, certainly adapting and revising their products according to the standards and measures of the place.

7 What do you think of the relationship between pallets and forklifts going forward? How will it change?

DL: I believe that the relationship between the two tools is also consolidating because, for example, in certain countries such as Italy, there is a very strong tendency to continue specifying the wooden pallet. We consider it to be a very noble and very precious material, so I certainly believe that, for now, this pairing will have a long history ahead. On the other hand, around the 1940s, this combination (forklift and pallet) partially unhinged the previous combination – the one between the sled or skid and the platform lift truck (i.e., without forks which were only invented in 1940).

8 What has been the response to your book? What has resonated with readers?

DL: The response on the Italian market was very good and to the point that it prompted me to translate the book into English, and it will certainly be translated into Spanish in the near future.

Davide's book, ***The World History of Pallet and Forklift: A fascinating and indissoluble storyline***, runs 296 pages and is Priced at \$32.63. It is available on Amazon.

North American readers can purchase it at this link: <https://lnkd.in/dmxsdk4S>. The UK English version can be found here: <https://lnkd.in/dAdnNARN>

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