

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

1996

Review of *Roadside History of South Dakota* By Linda Hasselstrom

Charles Vollan

South Dakota State University, charles.vollan@sdstate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Vollan, Charles, "Review of *Roadside History of South Dakota* By Linda Hasselstrom" (1996). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 1144.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/1144>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

with a particular place. Always fascinated by the landscape and people of her home state, she views them with a critical, yet forgiving eye.

Unlike more formal guidebooks, here the author's personality is as central as the landscape. Historical marks and old highways are given their due, but the work is more essentially a conversation about the land, its people, and their past. Hasselstrom openly shares her convictions concerning the environment, women's roles, the treatment of tribal peoples, and similar topics normally omitted in travel guides. An unusually progressive tour of South Dakota's past and present results.

Hasselstrom informs the reader early of her biases. She prefers the rural to the urban, two-lane highways to fast moving freeways, and regional myths to documented facts. This does not mean that she ignores the urban or favors tall tales, but that she is most concerned with getting to the heart of the character of the state.

A decidedly non-traditional history, the work is organized into a series of short essays arranged geographically. Hasselstrom first details the history of a region, from before human occupation to the present, noting its general characteristics and its social and political tendencies. She does the same for each town and its local celebrities, successfully balancing a love of the past with an appreciation of the present. She does not limit herself to the South Dakota of the last half of the nineteenth century, but reaches for the entirety of the region's past, from Paleo-Indians to contemporary ranchers. What results is an unusually interesting and inclusive guide that would make any trip through the state a great deal more enjoyable.

Roadside History of South Dakota. By Linda Hasselstrom. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1994. Preface, chronology, black and white photographs, maps, epilogue, bibliography, index. xxii + 467 pp. \$16.00 paper.

Travelers through South Dakota desiring an engaging discussion of the state's past and present will do well to pick up Linda Hasselstrom's *Roadside History*. The author of several works—both fiction and non-fiction—on South Dakota life, Hasselstrom addresses her subject, not as a historian, but a writer in love

CHUCK VOLLAN
Department of History
University of Nebraska-Lincoln