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Review of *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-72* By Gretchen Cassel Eick

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South or the Northeast, but Gretchen Eick makes a convincing case that important developments, long ignored by most scholars, were happening in the Midwest too.

Eick surveys a broad range of topics, including education, employment, housing, and relations between the national and local NAACP. Much of the story in Wichita resembles that in other parts of the nation. Real estate agents thwarted efforts at neighborhood integration. Local officials dragged their heels on school integration until pressure from the federal government forced change. The aircraft industry, the center of Wichita's manufacturing economy, often discriminated in employment practices. Civil rights advocates had to overcome fierce white opposition that sometimes included vigilante action. The Midwest, she persuasively shows, was no bastion of racial tolerance. Eick's conclusion nicely highlights the parallels and differences between what happened in Wichita and developments in southern cities.

Eick presents rich portraits of many activists who engaged in this struggle yet avoids romanticizing her subjects. She breaks important new ground in telling the story of Chester Lewis Jr., a talented lawyer who played key roles in local battles over housing, employment, and schooling. Nationally, he led a movement of "Young Turks" in a five-year struggle (1964-1968) to challenge the leadership of the NAACP, which he believed ran the group in an undemocratic fashion and had grown isolated from the needs of most African Americans. Eick vividly chronicles how NAACP leader Roy Wilkins employed heavy-handed tactics to turn back the insurgents.

Eick also demonstrates the importance of Wichita in discussing the sit-ins that occurred at local drug stores in 1958. The Greensboro, North Carolina, sit-ins two years later are standard fare in movement historiography, but those in Wichita were the first successful sit-ins of the freedom struggle.

Based on solid archival research as well as interviews with dozens of activists, this work will appeal to specialists in the modern civil

Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-72. By Gretchen Cassel Eick. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001. Black-and-white photographs, notes, bibliography, index. xiv + 312 pp. \$39.95.

Community studies of the modern civil rights movement have tended to focus on the

rights movement and to scholars and teachers of Midwestern history. One minor criticism is how Eick handles shifting her focus from the national to the local scene. At times her attention to broaden national trends helps illuminate local developments, but in other places the national narrative is too extensive, needlessly interrupting the local story.

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