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Fall 2003

**Review of *Growing Up with the Town: Family and Community on the Great Plains* By Dorothy Hubbard Schwieder**

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Wolff, David A., "Review of *Growing Up with the Town: Family and Community on the Great Plains* By Dorothy Hubbard Schwieder" (2003). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2373.

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*Growing Up with the Town: Family and Community on the Great Plains.* By Dorothy Hubbard Schwieder. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002. xv + 198 pp. Photographs, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Dorothy Schwieder knows community history. As a historian at Iowa State University, she investigated a number of Iowa locations, especially that state's coal camps. In *Growing Up with the Town*, Schwieder takes a much more personal look at the community she grew up in, Presho, South Dakota. Her father arrived in Presho in 1909, just four years after the Milwaukee Railroad established the town, and Schwieder tells Presho's story through the activities of her family. She has two motives: first, "to preserve at least a part of a small town's experience in its first fifty years," and second, "to document the history of a family within that town." In reality, this is a labor of love. Schwieder is proud to have grown up in Presho; she adores her family; and she ties these sentiments together to create a community history.

This formulation is attractive, exploring a community through its most fundamental unit, a family, but Schwieder attempts to do more. For instance, she delves into environmental history. Presho sits on the eastern edge of the Great Plains, and Schwieder talks at some length about the Great Plains' influence, arguing that the difficult environment caused residents to develop a "mentality of the Plains," which incorporated "a pragmatism, a stoicism, and an extraordinary work ethic." But then Schwieder also delves into genealogy as she

explores the backgrounds of her grandparents in Ireland and Norway to find the values and attitudes that passed through the generations.

Schwieder's book is chronological, broken into two parts, depending on her sources. The material in the first, "The Early Years," comes from what she calls a "collective memory." The second starts in about 1938 and is titled "A Personal Perspective" because she is the primary source. The book is at its best when Schwieder discusses traumatic times on the Plains, the droughts and the Depression, especially as her father struggled to run an International Harvester equipment business, raise a large family, and persevere after the death of his first wife.

People interested in Great Plains communities, South Dakota history, and the early twentieth-century frontier experience will find this work of value. Yet it has shortcomings. A map of western South Dakota and of Presho would have helped. Also, Schwieder credits the Plains environment and her father for the work ethic of her family. This dual argument weakens her point about the Plains environment. (Her father would have worked hard no matter where he lived.) Finally, while her bringing in thoughts from a number of scholars adds a certain intellectual flavor, it detracts some from this loving account of Presho.

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