



Iowa: The Middle Land

Dorothy Schwieder

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In this engrossing history of the Hawkeye State, Dorothy Schwieder brings her seasoned insight to the story of the Middle Land. Iowa emerges here as a place of fascinating grassroots politics, economic troubles and triumphs, surprising cultural diversity, and unsung natural beauty. Above all, this is the history of the people of Iowa and the lives they have led - the accomplishments of both ordinary and not-so-ordinary Iowans. The twenty-ninth state was admitted to the Union on December 29, 1846. After 150 years of statehood, The Middle Land gives a fresh perspective on what happened in Iowa and why. It also looks at where it happened. The underlying theme is Iowa's location in the center of the United States and the implications of that middle land status. From grasslands to factories, Black Hawk to Branstad, Schwieder takes the reader on a compelling journey. She presents the experience of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Native Americans in the Iowa region; the beginning of white settlement; and the subsequent development of social, educational, and economic institutions. In often arresting detail, Schwieder recounts recent episodes of Iowa's history, such as the farm crisis of the 1980s and the initiation of the lottery and casino gambling. She explores previously neglected areas and issues of social history - women, minorities, community, and Prohibition. Dorothy Schwieder has given us a most valuable addition to our understanding of America's "purest of prairie states." Iowa: The Middle Land is well suited for college history courses and senior-high courses. It is a fine library reference for all Iowans (and non-Iowans) wishing to know more about the state's history. The book uniquely emphasizes Iowa's economic and social history and draws on manuscript sources not previously cited in general histories of Iowa.

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