

worked in a blacksmith shop, a granite works, clerked for WPA programs, and then pursued a secondary education that culminated in a doctorate and a career as a nuclear biologist in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Fowler goes into vivid detail about the Depression era's perceptions of death, birth, health, and disease, including his own battle with polio. During his stint in the WPA relief application office, Fowler saw once successful farmers who "cried their hearts out in shame at having fallen so low." But Fowler does not neglect the better elements of his time growing up during the Depression. He describes a practical joke played on his WPA supervisor that included a cow udder and a meat cleaver, tells of building spool tractors, motorized scooters from orange crates, and transistor radios, and relates the terrifying experience of being asked on a date by a girl.

Delaney's childhood in Mitchell was less centered on work, though as the youngest of five children with siblings much older than herself, she had her own share of struggles. Much of her memoir focuses on how she spent her free time, including roller skating, climbing trees, and reading books in her family's expansive attic, which was also violently haunted. She also discusses growing up Catholic in a town with a very anti-Catholic KKK organization, and the habits of her larger-than-life father, one of Mitchell's most successful doctors.

Delaney's memoir tells the story of a girl who felt smothered by the male-centric world in which she lived. Her father expected his daughters to become wives, not independent women. Delaney wanted to go hunting with the boys (Delaney's description of this "sacred ritual" is excellent), talk about war, and have a job so she could live on her own. Eventually she discovered a career, an education, and happiness in New Mexico, but the journey was a long one.

At times, the book's chapters seem self-explanatory enough that each could be read separately. They are grouped categorically instead of chronologically, which will help researchers looking for information about "Social Environment and Religion" in the 1930s, or a first hand account by a fourteen-year-old girl who wanted to serve in World War II. For readers wishing to read the book from start to finish, it is a bit more difficult.

Fowler's memoir, rich with his incredibly detailed memories, addresses Depression-era society as a whole, while Delaney's, most notable for her wry humor, concentrates on her own and her family's story. Both offer incredible insight into a time that changed America forever.

Kyle Kinley
Nebraska State Historical Society

Small-town Boy, Small-town Girl: Growing up in South Dakota, 1920-1950

Eric B. Fowler and Sheila Delaney

Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2009. Edited and with an introduction by Molly P. Rozum, illustrations, notes, index, vi, 262 pp., \$17.95 paper.

Many memoirs, especially those with "small-town" in the title, contain so much obscure family and community drama that readers not from that small town wish they had continued never knowing it existed. The memoirs in *Small-town Boy, Small-town Girl: Growing up in South Dakota 1920-1950* focus on events instead of people, and the raw emotion of Fowler and Delaney's writing captures a time period now infamous in American history. The introduction by Molly P. Rozum sets up the history of the area, as well as economic, social, and political details that root Fowler's and Delaney's memories solidly in fact. Much of this history, however, may be interesting only to readers from the Millbank and Mitchell areas of South Dakota.

Fowler's tale relates the struggles of growing up in Millbank during the late 1920s and all through the Depression. His father died when he was nine, leaving his mother with no education and three young children to feed. Over his lifetime Fowler