The Checkered Years: a Bonanza Farm Diary, 1884-1888

ISSN 0003-4827
Copyright © 1990 State Historical Society of Iowa. This article is posted here for personal use, not for redistribution.

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.9501

Hosted by Iowa Research Online
Book Notices


REVIEWED BY SARA BROOKS SUNDBERG, TULANE UNIVERSITY

The Checkered Years: A Bonanza Farm Diary, 1884–88 is the daily, first-hand account of a widow who, along with three of her grown children, lived and worked on a fifteen-hundred-acre commercial wheat farm in Dakota Territory, near present-day Fargo, North Dakota. Mary Dodge Woodward’s diary entries reveal daily work routines within seasonal changes on the farm, her impressions of the landscape, weather, and neighbors around her, and strong family relationships.

First published in 1937, Mary Dodge Woodward’s diary is uncommon in the literature of western women’s history because her experience was uncommon. Bonanza wheat farms in the Red River valley made up an unusual chapter in the history of the agricultural frontier of the Midwest. Mary Dodge Woodward’s diary provides valuable information concerning women’s roles and activities within the rhythms of farm life in such settings. Moreover, as historian Elizabeth Jameson’s new introduction explains, Woodward came west not for land or out of curiosity, but as a widow who accompanied her children. This new edition of Mary Dodge Woodward’s diary restores to view an important dimension of western women’s experience.


REVIEWED BY PATRICIA ECKHARDT, IOWA CITY

Louis Sullivan, one of America’s most influential architects, was a writer and theorist as well. The Public Papers assembles all of his essays, speeches and talks, committee reports, letters to the editor,