



# Natives of a Dry Place : Stories of Dakota Before the Oil Boom

Richard Edwards



As a child, I thought of my town-as most children probably do-as just an ordinary place...Yet I have come to think that there were exceptional things in the lives of its people and especially in the values and virtues that they believed in and aspired to.-Richard Edwards. Before the oil industry transformed western North Dakota, the natives of Stanley went about their normal, everyday lives. Postmen, farmers, housewives, doctors, and other residents of the bustling town held certain qualities close as they cultivated the cultural fabric of the Great Plains. For generations, inhabitants of this wheat-growing region developed a combination of resoluteness, steadfastness, devotion to the community, and ever-present modesty. Contrasting these values with the trials of the modern oil-boom community, author Richard Edwards examines the old towns virtues through the stories of those who built and sustained a community on the dry, open plains in the twentieth century. A deeply personal look at a small North Dakota town, Natives of a Dry Place focuses on a not-so-distant past and takes readers on a journey of reflection to a time before big oil. Edwards uses his experience as both a historian and an economist to delve into the overarching questions of what makes a community and how it survives during times of upheaval.

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