

Esther's Town (Bur Oak Book)

Deemer Lee

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Esther's Town could be "Any Town, U.S.A.," for the equals of its cast of characters can be found in any small town. And here, as usual, was the town newspaper editor, the observing eye of all the foibles and peccadillos that form any town's history. Remembering all the years with love and humor, editor Deemer Lee chronicled the forty-four years he gathered and wrote news—forty-one of them as editor and publisher of his town's newspaper.

He dug into old records, recalled old times, and talked with old-timers. He illuminated the transition of a town, from Estherville's pioneer settlement to the busy, active town it is today.

The excitement and fun begin with a story of bootleggers, Chautauqua meetings, and an accomplished arsonist—who achieves in less than two months the impressive score of burning seven barns and one feed store, with an unsuccessful attempt on the Methodist church. Scandinavians move in, build crude shelters for the first winter, and add their special characteristics to the town. The Irish arrive and stamp their mark on the whole territory. The circus comes to town and entrances everyone with its ancient pageantry. The railroads come through and add a rowdy element to the population. The Depression begins and farms see 11-cent corn, 108-degree heat, and a twister.

All these events, plus adventures with a massive meteorite and haunting river tragedies, create the drama and flow of small-town life, story by story, in a fascinating revelation of Americana.



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