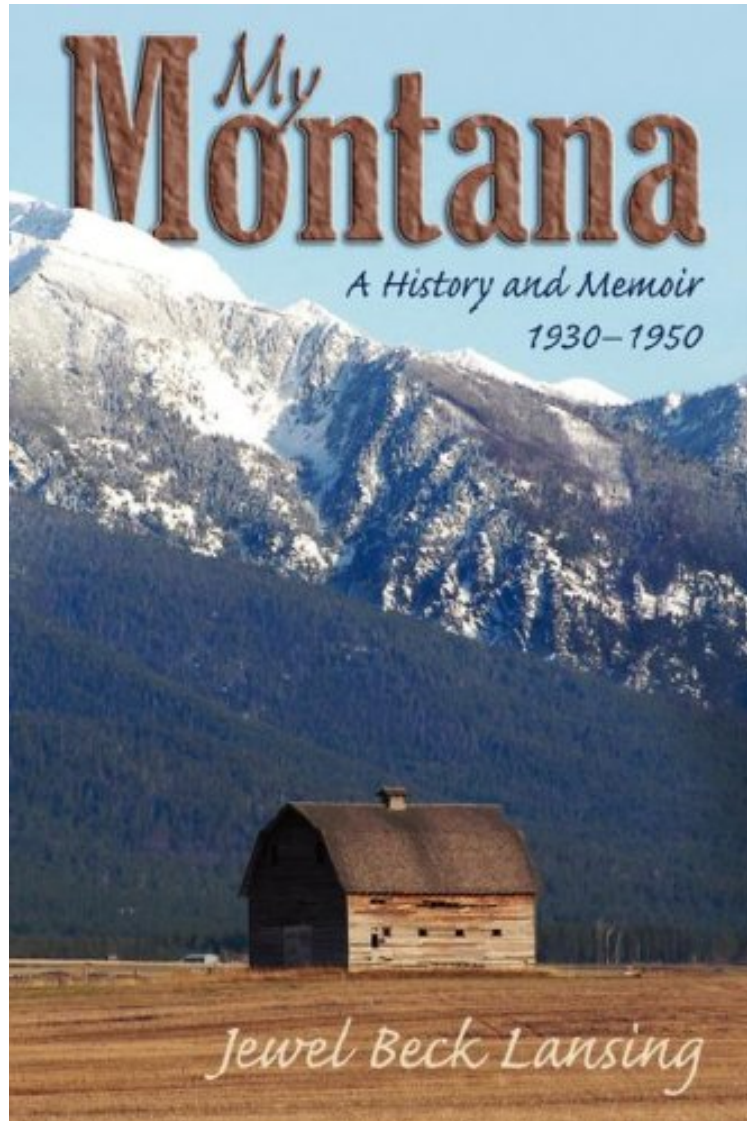


(Download) My Montana: A History and Memoir, 1930-1950

My Montana: A History and Memoir, 1930-1950

Jewel Beck Lansing

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Jewel Beck Lansing : My Montana: A History and Memoir, 1930-1950 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised My Montana: A History and Memoir, 1930-1950:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Mission Valley SisterBy LonnieI gave this to my father-in-law who grew up in the same state at the same time -- he was very pleased with it.Before I wrapped it, I glanced through it and discovered a pic of my first school. The author was a freshman there the year I entered that same school in Ronan as a first-grader.Obviously this book brought pleasure to both me and my family.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Loved it!By sally arnoldI loved this book because I was born there and it brought back a lot of memories. It

probably wouldn't mean as much to someone that didn't come from there. Sally Arnold 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Other America By Paula Younger In My Montana: A History and Memoir, 1930 - 1950, Jewel Beck Lansing, an Oregon-based writer, tells the story of her family, the Becks, who farmed like the rest of their neighbors in Round Butte on the Flathead Indian Reservation, but also owned the Beck General Store and the attached post office, making them one of the most influential families in their area. Despite the name of the land, the Becks were not Native Americans, nor were most of their neighbors. The government sold the "surplus" homesteads for cheap to Caucasians, yet Lansing never really says why. Although Lansing's memoir portrays her childhood growing up on a farm in Montana, parts of this could have been about my father's family farm in Kansas, and, at some moments, the acreage I grew up on in northern Colorado. There are the familiar tales: 4-H agricultural clubs and competitions, burning trash (no such thing as pick-up), growing hay, making ice cream, dogs having run-ins with skunks, fathers paying for everything with cash, making soap, and the daily meal coming from the garden and animals just outside the front door. As I read, I felt like I was having a conversation with one of my relatives, being reminded of what the relatively recent past was like. Forget about cell phones and computers, back then plenty of Middle American farmers grew up without plumbing, electricity, and telephones. The Becks' general store had one of the few telephones in the area. Lansing's father "delivered emergency messages as far away as fifteen miles, a service that he considered an obligation for the privilege of having a phone." Her family was one of the fortunate few to have an indoor bathroom with running water. Still, this was one bathroom and as a family of eight, Lansing and her siblings often used their outhouse, a two-seater so that more than one person could use it at the same time. Every "three or four years," Lansing writes, "Dad moves the outdoor privy onto a new hole that he has dug. He dumps unburnable garbage like tin cans and unusable bottles down the old hole and fills it with dirt." Alas, Lansing's grade school wasn't fortunate enough to have running water and, as a result, the two outhouses "were six-seaters...Pupils wanting to use these facilities while school was in session raised their right hands with one finger extended for 'Number One' and two fingers extended for 'Number Two.'" This gives new meaning to adults asking children if they have to go number one or two. Unfortunately, at times I felt like I was stuck with one of my boring relatives. The strength of My Montana lies in its details, not its storytelling. I wish Lansing would have treated the reader to more sensory details so that this would have been a vivid experience for both of us. Still, every few pages rewards the patient reader with another fascinating detail. For example, before World War II, Lansing had to wear boys' jeans, because girls' jeans didn't exist yet. In her college years, girls weren't allowed to wear pants except on Saturday mornings. One of my favorite details is when Lansing's older sister becomes upset because she was no longer allowed to play basketball; not due to an injury, but because "girls' high school basketball was banned by the Montana Board of Education in 1939. Basketball was too hard on girls...and would cause varicose veins. The American Medical Association said strenuous interscholastic sports made pregnancy difficult for young women and overdeveloped their muscles." There is much love for Lansing's family, friends, farm life, and Round Butte expressed in this memoir, which adds to the enjoyable experience. Still, sometimes the narrator annoyed me. Jewel Beck Lansing was the good kid, the one parents wanted their children to hang around with. Lansing never rebelled and I often wished she'd displayed more spirit. Here's one quote about her love life: Romantic relationships with college boys were problematic. The pressure to "make out" was even more intense than in high school, especially when alcohol was involved. I spent most weekend nights reading or playing bridge and corresponding with a high school boyfriend who had moved out of state. But as I was becoming irritated with my narrator, I came upon a picture of Lansing with the other journalism majors at the University of Montana. In 1952 they traveled to central Montana to staff an edition of the Lewistown Daily News. Lansing is the lone woman in the photograph. After graduation she became a secretary, because the only journalism job available to her was a society page editor, something that didn't interest her. In these days where a woman is a serious candidate for the President of the United States and some young women have the luxury to claim they are not feminists, it is easy to forget what opportunities for women used to be like. In Lansing's way, she was a rebel after all. I longed to hear more about the Native Americans in My Montana. Lansing offers tantalizing bits, such as when she became aware one of her friends was Native American because he "received free milk at lunchtime." Also, at local pow-wow grounds "sheriff's deputies circulated among the parked cars...looking for signs of alcohol...federal law prohibited the sale of liquor to Indians." Still, despite her good details, she could have delved even more into the history of the Native Americans and why the government sold their land. Alas, like many of those tough Middle American farmers, my father included, Lansing left the land and Montana. After graduation and marriage, she eventually moved to Portland where she served as the elected City of Portland Auditor and wrote six other books, including Portland: People, Politics, and Power, 1851 - 2001. If you have any interest in how Montana used to be, or growing up on a farm in Middle America in a time when plumbing and electricity were not plentiful, then don't miss My Montana. You won't regret sitting down with Lansing and hearing about the place and experiences.[...]

Those of us growing up in the 1930-1950 era will appreciate Jewel Beck Lansing's experiences as related in My Montana: A History and Memoir, 1930-1950. You needn't have grown up in rural Montana to appreciate them either - many western and mid-west farms and ranches shared the same lifestyle. No running water, no electricity except by

generator; hand-cranked wall telephones and party lines; water wells that needed priming before pumping, country dances. And those WWII years of food/gasoline/rubber/shoe rationing; the theoretical 35 mph national speed limit; collecting magazines, papers, tinfoil, metal for the war effort; candy bar shortages; young men leaving for the armed forces, some never to return. Difficult days? Yes, but the challenges were met with ingenuity, cooperation, camaraderie and humor.