

A SMALL TOWN ON THE EDGE OF THE PRAIRIE — FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE COME SOME THOUGHTS ON THE VALUES AND LEGACY OF THE GENERATION THAT FOLLOWED LAURA INGALLS WILDER'S, IN THE UPPER MIDWEST

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Abstract: This is an update of a presentation given at the 18th North American Prairie Conference (NAPC) at Truman State University, in Kirksville Missouri, in 2002. That is, "Lessons for Life — From the Early Prairie Settlement Culture of Central Minnesota." Whether judged as good or bad, I don't think that many would dispute that seascape changes have occurred in world-view values from those that were mainstream in the 1880's, compared to those prevalent in our time. A number of themes related to this will be discussed — themes which this author often had personal exposure to. My early childhood in Melrose Minnesota (Stearns County), had some strong influences from that mid 1880's generation, via living with a grandma, who was born the year Geronimo surrendered (1886). I had known for years before I reported on it in 2002, that there were a number of heavy historical figures in that local area — people like Charles Lindbergh, Sinclair Lewis, etc. However, it wasn't until the 18th NAPC time of ca. 2002 that the great historic and societal significance of this area really occurred to me. Now, such issues seem to be taking on even greater relevance — even one with implications relating to a sustainability of our survival in the short-term (within the next five to ten years or so).