



Central Standard: A Time, a Place, a Family (Bur Oak Book)

Patrick Irelan

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Not so long ago, the Rock Island Railroad was a household name, the Great Depression was a recent memory, and family farms dotted the landscape. Today, the great railroads have nearly disappeared, the Depression is a chapter in history books, and family farms are hard to come by. Yet this time is not forgotten.

In *Central Standard: A Time, a Place, a Family*, Patrick Irelan vividly recaptures a remarkable era in midwestern history in twenty-four beautifully crafted and often witty essays. Beginning with his parents' marriage in 1932 and continuing into the present, Irelan relates the many wonderful stories and experiences of his Davis County, Iowa, family. In "Country Living," he describes his parents' disheartening life as farmers during the worst years of the Depression. "The CB&Q" then relates the happiest years of his family's life when his parents lived and worked in the Burlington Railroad depots of rural Nebraska.

Irelan's tales of hard times and harder work, family meals and talkative relatives, depots and farmsteads paint a brilliant yet deceptively simple portrait of one rural, working-class family. At its heart, *Central Standard* carries a greater message: it reminds us of the enduring strength of the American family.

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