



New Era: Reflections on the Human and Natural History of Central Oregon

Jarold Ramsey

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New Era is a graceful and literate collection of personal essays on the human and natural history of the Central Oregon high desert, focusing on what happened to the people and the land of this region during and after the homesteading era of 1900 to 1920. It is a book full of stories--about early Indian/Anglo connections, about the ghost town of Opal City, about homestead ranches and the families who struggled to make their lives there. Each chapter offers a new perspective on the interplay of human and natural history in a challenging time and place. Although Ramsey's focus is intensely local, he explores how these local details have larger Western and American meanings, too. In his introduction, Ramsey writes that the title of his book comes from the name of our little country school, and if it catches a sense of the indomitable optimism of the homesteaders who established it for their children, I also want it so suggest my concern ... with changes in the land, and with what can get thrown aside and lost in the name of newness and progress. The stories gathered in New Era capture these changing and changed lives and landscapes. Jarold Ramsey was born in Central Oregon and grew up on his family's ranch there. He left the ranch to attend college, and became an award-winning essayist and poet, as well as a published playwright and a respected authority on traditional American Indian literature. New Era will appeal to a wide range of readers beyond those interested in the Oregon high desert country, especially those who value story-telling and the literature of place.

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