“Pacing Dakota” by Dr. Tom Isern

Book review by Carol Just, St. Louis Park, Minnesota

I love being drawn into a book. Pacing Dakota - not rushing, not impatient, not urgent, like a slow waltz – reads like a sweet conversation with a long lost friend or relative who didn't think they had anything to say and – turns out that if you are patient – they indeed have things to share. This author has captured my researcher heart.

Pacing Dakota includes plenty of archival research that is generously shared, but it is in the telling that we are drawn in. It is prose that is, in turn, poetic. I found myself right there - in the moment - howling with laughter one minute and weepy the next. A good storyteller does that.

The writing style feels conversational, but I couldn't get a word in edgewise, so my copy is covered with margin notes. That is a sign of good writing and research. It makes you want to know more. Pacing Dakota would make a great book club choice.

I have researched the history of the people of the plains for at least four decades. Pacing Dakota took me to places I know well, but more importantly, took me to places I didn't know existed. I love that.