



# Land of the Burnt Thigh (Borealis Books)

*Edith Eudora Kohl*

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## **Land of the Burnt Thigh (Borealis Books) Edith Eudora Kohl**

Among the hordes of homesteaders who settled the American West were thousands of single women who hoped to gain for themselves a piece of land and the money and satisfaction that came along with it. The memoirs of many of these self-described "girl homesteaders," long ignored by historians, show the significant impact these women had on their communities. *Land of the Burnt Thigh*, first published in 1938, is one of the best of these accounts. Edith Eudora Ammons and her sister Ida Mary moved to central South Dakota in 1907 to try homesteading near the "Land of the Burnt Thigh"--the Lower Brule Indian Reservation. These two young women, both in their twenties and "timid as mice," found a community of homesteaders (including several other single women) who were eager to help them succeed at what looked to be impossible: living in a tiny tarpaper shack on 160 waterless, sunbaked, and snowblasted acres for eight months until they could "prove up" the claim. Within as few weeks Edith was running a newspaper, Ida Mary was teaching school, and the two were helping others who had come to settle. In the months to come, they battled prairie fires, rattlesnakes, and a blizzard; they observed two great land rushes; they staked a new claim, founded their own newspaper, opened a post office and a general store, and overcame their fear of the Indians who came to trade with them. In her introduction, historian Glenda Riley discusses the Ammons sisters' adventures and those of many other women homesteaders. Praise for *Land of the Burnt Thigh* "Their story is genuinely stirring in its events, as it is interesting in its spirit and atmosphere, and it is told simply and well... This is an unusual record, well worth reading."--*New York Times* "Mrs. Kohl has told this story of South Dakota with a simplicity, a directness, and an understanding of its quietly heroic element which make her book an appealing as well as a significant contribution to the latter-day history of the pioneers."--*Saturday Review*

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