

Delaware from Freeways to E-Ways: First State, Solid-State

Dave Tabler

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Made up of intriguing peeks into the state's historical contributions, Delaware from Freeways to E-Ways is a concise, celebratory reference text that focuses on twentieth-century Delaware.

A history text in vignettes, Dave Tabler's reference book *Delaware from Freeways to E-Ways* focuses on historical moments related to the state's twentieth-century process of modernization.

Covering a century in total, each page of the book focuses on a single moment in Delaware's history, proffering compelling anecdotes to fuel general interest in learning more about the state's contributions to culture and technology. There are stories about the founding of the state's first public library and about the local creation of the first spacesuits worn on the moon. Agricultural, rural, and social changes are included, with emphasis placed on how the state became a major player in technological advancements. In addition, there are trivia-evocative notes on Delaware residents' colloquial speech patterns, the importance of the holly bush, and national figures that hailed from Delaware. Over seventy topics are covered, together constituting a rough overview of life in the state in the twentieth century.

The book's organization is haphazard, though, with individual stories introduced on single pages but not completed there; sometimes, the entries cut off before their theses have been relayed. The topics are returned to much later in the book, impeding easy continuity. For example, the book's entry on suffrage excludes Delaware's involvement in the movement in the first portion of the story, reserving this information for the second half of the book. Some essays fall outside the scope of the title as well, including those that focus on events that took place before 1900. Further, most of the entries appear sans headings, impeding fluid navigation. The exceptions are the book's "Custom and Folklore Sidebars," not all of which are folklore or custom related. The table of contents only runs until the book's midpoint, omitting the second halves of the stories, limiting the book's usefulness and accessibility as a reference text.

The prose is accessible, if often lacking in nuance and support. The book's attributions are too sporadic, too, with the exception of the acknowledgements page, which covers some sources, but without clarifying which portions of the text they correspond to. In addition, several images appear without being made to connect to the stories they appear near, including computer-generated images of sad-looking farmers and Model A cars.

Delaware from Freeways to E-Ways is a concise, celebratory history of twentieth-century Delaware.

AHLIAH BRATZLER (August 14, 2024)

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