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The Grid and the Village: Losing Electricity, Finding Community, Surviving Disaster

Stephen Doheny-Farina

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#2866551 in Books Stephen Doheny Farina 2001-09-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .63 x 5.511, .89 #File Name: 0300089775240 pages The Grid and the Village Losing Electricity Finding Community Surviving Disaster | File size: 31.Mb

Stephen Doheny-Farina : The Grid and the Village: Losing Electricity, Finding Community, Surviving Disaster before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Grid and the

Village: Losing Electricity, Finding Community, Surviving Disaster:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. disappointingBy Matthew R. BrownThis was an attempt to use fictional techniques in writing history, and it really doesn't succeed, in my opinion. I teach history, and love to read well-written history. This was more interesting as research reporting than narrative; it also felt padded. I didn't bother finishing it, because i felt the narrative sections were so weak.2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Tells part of the story of the Great Ice StormBy D. RosenfeldHere is what I emailed to the author:"Just finished reading it. Thank you, excellent book.On the next printing, please remove the attack on consumerism in the guise of a once in a 250 year storm as justification. A little absurd.Also: how about a section on why the towers for the power transmission cables failed. Why the engineering specs were not more robust.And, a section on what happened to house hold plumbing with arctic temperatures and no heat.Thank you."I didn't receive a response.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An amazing storm, so talk to those folksBy Walleye AssassinLiving in Potsdam at the time, as a student, the storm came upon us in a way that is difficult to describe. It seemed as if it kept building, and building, and before you knew it, the outdoors became incredibly dangerous. As the ice really began forming, about three days into the storm, if I remember, I went outside and watched trees along the street (98 Main) collapse and crack. The sound was like fireworks in the dark neighborhood. For some reason, i decided that was a good time to walk over the the shelter I'd heard about at Maxcy to see if they needed any volunteers. They didn't that night, so I went home. When I woke, the temp in my bedroom was 28 degrees. My roommates and I evacuated to Maxcy Hall and, thanks to a friendly janitor, got to sleep on a wrestling mat in a practice room. There weren't enough beds that night. The next fews days I spent managing the PA system in the two gyms, making some announcements. I felt guilty because a few of us got to sleep in the girls locker room, next to the pool, which was heated, and the warm, wet air was a lot better than the drafty gymnasium. On the day Governor Patacki came, in his state trooper jacket, I was running through the building trying to get lunch to the other PA operator, a mortuary student from SUNY Canton, before the governor got to my PA station upstairs. I ran around a corner and full on into a security guy for the governor. Had Patacki been in front of him I would have sacked the governor of NY. :-)I wish more of that kind of experience had made its way into this book. As it was, there were a lot of facts gleaned from newspaper articles, but those reporters weren't there speaking to us at the time. They did some amazing work, putting out a combined couple of issues of the papers, as I recall, but they didn't see a lot of the detail that made this story so harrowing for those that lived it.A really unforgettable part of my life, and a treasured memory of Potsdam, the school, and the incredible people of the North Country.

In January 1998 a massive ice storm descended on New York, New England, and eastern Canada. It crushed power grids from the Great Lakes to the North Atlantic, forcing thousands of people into public shelters and leaving millions of others in their homes without electricity. In this riveting book Stephen Doheny-Farina presents an insiders account of these events, describing the destruction of the electric network in his own village and the emergence of the face-to-face interactions that took its place. His stories examine the impact of electronic communications on community, illuminating the relationship between electronic and human connections and between networks and neighborhoods, and exploring why and how media portrayals of disasters can distort authentic experience.Doheny-Farina begins by discussing the disaster and tracing the origins of the storm. He then goes back two hundred years to tell how this particular electric grid was built, showing us the sacrifices people made to create the grids that (usually) connect us to one another. Today's power grid, says Doheny-Farina, has become more vulnerable than we realize, as demand begins to outstrip capacity in urban centers around the nation. His book reminds us what those grids meanboth positively and negativelyto our electronically saturated lives.

From Publishers WeeklyWhether he is writing about the power grids that connect and illuminate our homes, the media and telecommunications webs that on any given news day put us all on the same page, or the social connections of family and neighborhood we rely on for support, Doheny-Farina (*The Wired Neighborhood*) provokes a startling awareness, or as he terms it, a "mindfulness," of what we have and how easily it can all be lost or regained, either through complacency or abrupt disaster. He strikes a deeply personal note in this blending of top-drawer social criticism with a gripping firsthand account of the 1998 ice storm that shut down parts of New York, New England and Canada. On its most basic level, this is Doheny-Farina's account of how that disaster changed him, his family and his neighbors in his hometown of Potsdam, N.Y., of 23 days without the power and communications grids we all take for granted and "the emergence of a community that filled the resulting void." But this book's great achievement rests not only on the author's sympathetic storyteller's eye, but also on his strikingly unique selection and ordering of information. His chapters are a weave of storm narrative, vignettes on the origin and evolution of the modern-day grid around Potsdam, and smart and notably self-aware riffs on the media's dubious role in disaster, this book being one example. The author's technique is as eye-opening as the sudden and complete leveling of a power grid by sheets of ice. (Sept.) Forecast: While smartly written by a professor and published under the Yale imprimatur, this is a trade

book, and one that, marketed properly, could find many sympathetic readers this winter. With rolling blackouts a recent, much hyped threat, grid issues have come enough to the fore that this media-savvy book fills a niche. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Doheny-Farina (technical communications, Clarkson Univ.; *The Wired Neighborhood*) presents a firsthand account of the Northeast's massive ice storm of 1998 and its consequences for his town of Potsdam, NY. This storm downed power grids from the Great Lakes to the North Atlantic, leaving some parts of the Eastern Seaboard without power for almost a month. Three stories are interwoven in this narrative: the history of power grids in the Northeast, the story of the storm, and its consequences for the community. Without access to mass media or network communications, Doheny-Farina and his neighbors discovered how much these technologies have come to shape every aspect of daily life. He identifies the importance of the grids (power, social, and media and communications) to which we are all connected and shows that disasters bring people closer together, causing them to reassess their relationships to the technological infrastructure and to their own community. An optional purchase for media studies and technology collections and for libraries located in the Northeast. Eva Lautemann, Georgia Perimeter Coll., Clarkston Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist January 1998: an ice storm whips through New York, New England, and nearby parts of Canada. Ice covers telephone lines, electricity lines, houses, and streets. Among the cities that lose power for a month is Potsdam, New York, the author's home. This insightful book is his chronicle of the storm and its aftermath. It's a combination of science and inspiration--a description of the destructive power of nature, a treatise on the workings and vulnerabilities of the power grids that control the distribution of electricity, and an affirmation of the power of a community to overcome seemingly insurmountable hardships. Despite Doheny-Farina's somewhat formal, textbooklike style, his account will hold the interest of many general readers. He provides a wealth of fascinating technical information; he tells several touching and very human stories about individuals responding to a crisis; and he convincingly demonstrates the axiom that if we stick together, we can do pretty much anything. David Pitt Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved