Faith and Family: Dutch Immigration and Settlement in the United States, 1820-1920

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Additionally, appendixes provide valuable insights into the nature of steamboat cargoes and frontier merchandising. Corbin lists the type and quantity of all artifacts found in both boats. One-third of the book is brief descriptions of 631 boats that plied the Missouri River in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although this section is the most complete listing ever done of Missouri River boats, it would have benefited from an introduction about its coverage. Contrary to a statement in the foreword, the listing is not limited to boat wrecks.

Anyone interested in frontier society will find this to be a very useful volume. It helps explain the development of the Missouri River route that was vital to western Iowa and other portions of the Midwest.


Reviewer Brian W. Beltman is an adjunct professor of history at the University of South Carolina and the author of *Dutch Farmer in the Missouri Valley: The Life and Letters of Ulbe Eringa, 1866–1950*. His research interests include rural social history and Dutch ethnic studies.

Historical studies about nineteenth-century Dutch immigration and settlement in the United States are distinguished from similar histories of other American ethnic groups by a remarkably high level of scholarship that has been sustained across three generations of research and writing. The first standard source appeared in the 1920s; Dutch historian Jacob Van Hinte crafted a monumental narrative that served as a definitive history for at least a generation. As a Netherlandic publication, however, it was not available in English until the 1980s. In the 1950s American scholar Henry S. Lucas produced the second encyclopedic survey of Dutch migration to the United States that became the basic reference source for students limited by their inability to read Dutch. This second-generation tome has been supplemented by the more recent works of Robert P. Swierenga, the latest component of an impressive scholarly triad that details Dutch ethnic history.

Swierenga’s forays into the subject have been fully within the context of the “new immigration history,” a body of research that relies heavily on statistical data rather than traditional narrative source material and reflects a longitudinal approach to the transplantation experience of ethnic groups. Both emigration from the Old Country and immigration to the New receive careful attention to fashion as completely as possible a holistic portrait of ethnocultural relocation. Swier-
enga's research and writing span more than thirty years of concerted labor and refinement and have appeared in various scholarly journals, proceedings, and anthologies. The volume under review here is essentially a collection of these piecemeal studies assembled under one cover and carefully edited and organized to present a unified discussion of the Dutch immigrant experience in the United States from 1820 to 1920.

As a social scientist cum traditional historian, Swierenga broke new ground in his scholarly studies through painstaking acquisition and analysis of thousands of names of emigrants/immigrants, accompanied by related demographic and other information. This data was drawn from original Netherlands government emigration lists for all Dutch provinces from 1847 to 1877 (and beyond in some instances), ship passenger manifests collected by U.S. customs agents beginning in 1820, and a nearly definitive listing of all Dutch-born immigrants and their children from the U.S. federal population census manuscripts of 1850, 1860, and 1870. With the use of computer sorting and matching, Swierenga then linked these rosters of names and traced Dutch migrants from their provincial origins in the Netherlands, through their arrival in American ports, to their relocations in the United States. Beyond this, he manipulated a wealth of information on age, gender, occupation, religion, economic status, tax assessment class, household size, motive for emigration, and geography of resettlement to derive conclusions about immigrants' socioeconomic conditions, social mobility, family structure, livelihoods, church affiliation, and more. Repeatedly reexamining the database with new or refined questions, he produced a catalog of studies that in the composite delineated the Dutch ethnic experience with unprecedented clarity and sophistication. The result, now available in this collected format, has been a new, more complete exegesis of the Dutch-American transplantation that underscores themes of cultural persistence, ethnic loyalty, resistance to assimilation, cluster settlement patterns across the American heartland, and the strength of ethnoreligious influences on immigrant behavior.

Swierenga organized ten chapters in this book under three topical categories—immigration patterns, religion, and work and politics—with a fourth part of two additional chapters dedicated to a discussion of statistics and sources. The work also includes 22 figures and 68 tables. Although the author's focus is on the aggregate experience of nineteenth-century Dutch immigrants in America by rigorous reliance on quantified data, Swierenga does not neglect the anecdotal detail or precise example regarding individuals or places that puts faces and
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features on the larger canvas and general landscape. Iowa readers can find frequent references to state and regional circumstances familiar to their context. One chapter specifically addresses the voting behavior of the Pella Dutch in the 1860 presidential election. The importance of religious localism and how the ethnic church gave form and substance to community life, shaping core beliefs and values to define the essence of cultural identity, are illustrated in part by the example of Dutch Reformed Calvinists in their cultural island of the West Side of Chicago. Swierenga also includes a chapter on the Dutch Jewish experience that highlights distinctive Dutch synagogues as well as their absorption into the broader stream of American Judaism.

In this single volume readers are introduced to the depth and breadth of Swierenga's scholarship on Dutch ethnic history in America. That scholarship readily wins readers' profound respect while it teaches them about content, method, and the author's commitment to historical truth, ardent research, and crisp writing. They also learn why Swierenga's reputation as the dean of Dutch-American studies is fully deserved and unassailable. If a fourth generation of research and writing in the twenty-first century upholds the tradition of excellence established by Swierenga and his predecessors, Dutch-American history will continue to be a benchmark for ethnic studies.


Reviewer Shirley Teresa Wajda is director of American Studies at Kent State University. Her research interests encompass domestic material culture and visual culture. She recently co-curated Designing Domesticity: Decorating the American Home, 1876 to the Present at the Kent State University Museum.

In An Iowa Album, Mary Bennett has created both a keepsake and (as stated in the subtitle) a history. These two purposes, often seen as distinct from one another by historians who set memory apart from history, artifact and image from text, are not necessarily at odds, here or generally speaking. Historians' current preoccupation with collective memory has uncovered versions of the past that are often quite different from the "official record" based on state records and other public documents. What memories a people choose and debate are often shaped by their own contemporary personal and social needs. Memory, in short, is not only historical in nature but itself has a history.

Memory studies conjoin traditional political history with the so-called new social history of the 1960s and its successors, which broad-