

## Crossings: Norwegian-American Lutheranism As a Transatlantic Tradition

ISSN 0003-4827

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### Recommended Citation

"Crossings: Norwegian-American Lutheranism As a Transatlantic Tradition." *The Annals of Iowa* 63 (2004), 326-328.

Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.10830>

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sent a balanced portrait of Barnard by more explicitly connecting her successes and failures to larger political trends in the state. The authors do not dispute Linda Reese's argument, in her excellent chapter on Barnard in *Women of Oklahoma*, that the reformer's always unstable mix of reform idealism, political savvy, and self-promotional crusading style succeeded when it was useful to the state's Democratic leadership and failed when it ran afoul of that male leadership's interests. But this narrowly focused biography does not expand on Reese's argument by exploring the shifts in the Oklahoma Democratic Party's agenda after 1910. Nor do the authors imaginatively exploit the sources available; while relying on *The Daily Oklahoman* for data, they never explain why that newspaper so strongly supported Barnard, what public image it shaped of her, or why it eventually abandoned her. They also make little use of Barnard's published articles to convey her line of argument or to compare her highly sentimentalized rhetorical style to the male politicians she allied with or the female activists she disdained.

It is unlikely that gender historians will be persuaded by the authors' argument that Barnard's "life and career contradict the prevalent theory . . . that women by choice developed a separate political culture." The fact that Barnard's individual circumstances caused her to distance herself from female political culture neither proves nor disproves the motives of entire groups of women around the United States. *One Woman's Political Journey* does, however, make a poignant case for the isolation and vulnerability of a pioneering female who relied on male support for her reform successes. When Oklahoma men turned against Barnard, she had no independent female base to advocate for her. Inadvertently, Barnard's brief career as the only-woman-in-office helps to explain the comparative political longevity of her contemporaries who had strong female networks to protect their public careers.

*Crossings: Norwegian-American Lutheranism as a Transatlantic Tradition*, edited by Todd W. Nichol. Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2003. xiv, 180 pp. Illustrations. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewer Mark Granquist is visiting assistant professor of religion at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota. His research and writing have focused on Scandinavian American Lutherans.

One of the recent trends in writing immigrant history is to try to place the experience of the immigrants in a larger context, one greater than just the tight-knit ethnic communities so typically formed by the new arrivals. Of great interest here are the continuing ties between the immigrant communities in the United States and the "old country" they

had left behind. In this volume, composed of lectures presented at a conference at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, in 2003, the authors attempt to show the effects of the continuing relationship between Lutheran communities formed by Norwegian Americans and their counterparts in Norway. This volume gives readers some fascinating glimpses into this immigrant religious world and the ways it participated in, and was enriched by, a lively transatlantic relationship with religious communities and leaders in Europe.

In the first essay, historian Jon Gjerde explores the opportunities and perils that Norwegian immigrants faced in the American religious environment. Norwegian American Lutheran leaders generally welcomed the freedom of religion they found in the United States, but it soon became clear to them that this freedom was a mixed blessing, as religion in their communities soon became divided and contentious. Orm Overland examines the way religion and church were handled in early immigrant letters, mostly before 1870. Those letters, mainly written by lay people, show a different side of the standard history of Norwegian American Lutherans. They suggest that denominational and doctrinal differences were less pronounced among lay people than among church leaders. Bjorn Sandvik, a Norwegian pastor, looks into the role of a particular catechism in the parallel development of the Church of Norway and Norwegian American Lutheranism, finding that the American groups retained a concept of the church that was lost in Norway. Art historian Marion John Nelson shows the complex relationship between folk art and popular religious piety, using old European customs, that has taken deep root in the United States. Norwegian church historian Vidar Haanes examines how the controversies and changes in Norwegian pastoral education and formation crossed the Atlantic, and how such issues affected the development of ministerial education among Norwegian Americans. Kathleen Stokker, professor of Norwegian at Luther College, explores the role of the Norwegian pastor as healer; she shows that although this role survived the Atlantic crossing, most of the folk magic beliefs about the healing pastor did not survive. Oyvind Gullikson uses the case study of a Norwegian American pastor to examine the changing context of preaching within Norwegian American congregations as they became more firmly entwined in their American context. Finally, Lloyd Hustvedt, retired Norwegian professor at St. Olaf College, gives some intimate glimpses into the life of a single Norwegian American congregation across 130 years to illustrate the changes and development of Norwegian American Lutheranism.

In every corner of Iowa and the upper Midwest, tight-knit ethnic communities have been a staple element of the landscape. It is easy to

think of these communities as insular and removed, not dealing very much with the world around them. These essays complicate our understanding of how such ethnic communities work, for the Norwegian Americans who settled in the Midwest were part of a much larger dynamic that involved relations with other immigrants and more settled Americans as well as with their ethnic kin across the ocean. We have a much richer understanding of the religious world of these immigrants as a result of the research of these eight authors.

*Peter S. Petersen's Memoirs*, edited by John W. Nielsen. Blair, NE: Lur Publications, Danish Immigrant Archive, Dana College, in cooperation with Karsten Kjer Michaelsen, Odense City Museum, and Odense University Press, 2003. xii, 248 pp. Illustrations, maps, indexes of places and people. \$27.50 paper.

Reviewer Terrence J. Lindell is professor of history at Wartburg College. His dissertation focused on the acculturation of Swedish immigrants in Kansas and Nebraska in the late nineteenth century.

Ten-year-old Peter S. Petersen emigrated from Denmark to America with his parents and siblings in 1872. The family first settled in Chicago, but after losing his wife and one child to disease, Petersen's father moved to a homestead claim near Dannebrog in Howard County, Nebraska. In the 1930s Petersen began writing his memoirs in English. These were first published in Danish in 1999. This is an English edition of the manuscript.

Petersen's anecdotal memoirs, generally arranged in chronological order, recount life in Denmark, the family's migration, the first year on his father's homestead, and his Nebraska and Wyoming work experiences as a farm and ranch laborer, railroad worker, and employee in various businesses until 1895. Historians will find the accounts of these work experiences useful for what they reveal about the lives of mobile young men looking for permanent opportunities.

However, Petersen's memoirs are overburdened with family histories of many of the people he encountered, listings of local events drawn from newspapers, and stories that contribute little to an understanding of his life. The editor adds nothing in the way of explanatory notes to set Petersen's story into larger contexts, direct the reader to other useful sources, or even correct errors and explain unusual terms. The editor of the Danish edition, in an introduction reprinted in this volume, notes, "This book should first and foremost be seen as a source of information for the Danish residents of Howard County, Nebraska" (x). That statement also holds true for this publication.

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