

importance of these pensions in shaping the quality of life for aging widows during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Pensioned widows had more freedom in choosing not to work and in selecting living arrangements than pensionless widows.

In America the Men Milk the Cows: Factors of Gender, Ethnicity, and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian-American Women, by L. DeAne Lagerquist. Chicago Studies in the History of Religion. Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1991. xvi, 255 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JANE M. PEDERSON, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE

Few immigrant groups more diligently recount their history than Norwegian-Americans. However, women's history is conspicuously underdeveloped in this field. L. DeAne Lagerquist has helped to fill a large gap by tracing the interconnectedness of gender, religion, and ethnicity as Norwegian-American women created American or modern identities. Relying on personal, literary, and institutional sources, she focuses exclusively on women who strongly identified with the Norwegian-American Lutheran church in the upper Midwest between 1850 and the early twentieth century. She concludes that the church mediated the move from traditional Norway to modern America, shaping identities and easing the transition to the American environment.

Lagerquist provides a tight overview of the distinct social, religious, and political background of Norway, which produced a pietistic peasantry progressively losing their land and a cultured *conditioneret*, a class-conscious professional and intellectual elite, with bureaucratic origins. Next she explores the diverse social, economic, and demographic factors that pushed women and men to leave, the difficulties of making the trip, the early challenges of settlement and institution building, and the well-known class, personality, and doctrinal conflicts that surfaced among the Norwegian-American Lutherans.

In a chapter on "Home and Family," Lagerquist notes change and continuity for women in America in gender identities, work arrangements, and material culture. Class structured women's lives and identities in Norway, on the trip across, and after they arrived. Peasant women prepared trunks of food for the trip and fed their families, while women of the *conditioneret* dined in staterooms on meals prepared by the ship's chef. Peasant women worked to recre-

ate their household economy, but the midwestern environment, new products, and new technologies transformed them into prosperous farm wives with genteel aspirations. Meanwhile, women of the *conditioneret* retreated into parsonages, where they wrestled with the American bourgeois "servant problem," with preserving their "culture," and with maintaining their class by socializing and marrying within the small circle of clerical families.

Beyond their homes, the Norwegian-American Lutheran church and its educational institutions offered an important though notably conservative arena of transition to becoming modern Norwegian-American women. The acceptance of women in leadership positions in the church is a late twentieth-century development. From the beginning, the church hierarchy allowed women no official status and offered little recognition. Nonetheless, the local congregations provided opportunities for socializing, self-definition, and autonomy for women. Religious rituals marked life passages and structured social life. Distinct women's societies, ladies aids, and missions appeared. Women typically engaged less in the doctrinal debates than did men and turned instead to the practical. As primary fundraisers for the churches, women's societies claimed for women a new authority in the congregation. Personally, women made a variety of uses of their Lutheranism, ranging from an uncomfortable morbid introspection to comforting formulaic pieties.

Like other American Protestant churches, Norwegian-American Lutheranism launched some women into careers beyond the prescribed spheres of home, family, and local congregation. Church colleges and other educational institutions influenced women as students, teachers, deaconesses, and missionaries. While the institutional goals for women were decidedly traditional, women on occasion used their education to create different agendas redefining the meaning of a Christian vocation for themselves.

Lagerquist's book is an important addition to women's and Norwegian-American history. To some extent she succeeds in her goal of transcending the limitations in Norwegian-American and religious history by including "ordinary people" and a "social history of the church" and by exploring the interconnectedness of gender, religion, and ethnicity. At the same time, this monograph remains captive in some ways to historiographic traditions she is trying to transform. As she notes, "I have considered primarily women who were active participants in congregations and who were often members of women's societies. Frequently these women were members of leadership families of the national church bodies" (10). The public discourse of these women was not likely to expose

the underside of Americanization or modernization. Inevitably from these sources, we learn far more about women in the parsonages than about the vast majority of women who became the "proverbial domestic servants" and farm women. The title promises something the book does not entirely deliver—the story of the peasant women who did milk cows in Norway and what happened to their work and gender and class identities in America. Thus we still need a social history of those women who claimed this ethnic identity but articulated it quite differently—those for whom a conservative Lutheranism may have proved far more problematic or far less significant.

Doing What the Day Brought: An Oral History of Arizona Women, by Mary Logan Rothschild and Pamela Claire Hronek. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992. xxxvii, 176 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY ELIZABETH HAMPSTEN, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

For *Doing What the Day Brought*, Mary Logan Rothschild and Pamela Claire Hronek interviewed thirty women of various ethnic, economic, and professional backgrounds who were in their seventies or older at the time and had lived their adult lives in Arizona (actually in the central Salt River valley, around Phoenix). The book's introduction summarizes women's history in Arizona, and the chapters following describe periods in women's life cycles and illustrate the information with quotations from interviews: arrivals in Arizona; childhoods usually rural and taking place before statehood; daily activities growing up; community building in adulthood; and work at every stage of life. In a concluding chapter women reflect on changes they experienced. The women interviewed are shown in two photographs: in youth, and at the time of the interview. A bibliography includes books and articles on women in the West and in Arizona.

Two impressions struck me about these women, who in the main reflect fairly traditional values (most said they were against the Equal Rights Amendment although they favored equal pay): they all sound enthusiastic about living in Arizona and love the state, and several also hold grave reservations about the very progress of the region that made their own lifetimes exhilarating. Settlement years had to have been hard for some, but having prospered, the memories of these women are happy: "When we first came here [to Phoenix], . . . the desert was solid [with] beautiful flowers. It was

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