

Party resulted in the passage of a limited school suffrage bill in 1861, the year Kansas achieved statehood. Pragmatically anchoring her activism to motherhood, Nichols knew she would be more effective in reaching politicians if she appeared to be morally upright and genteel (she knitted her way through many contentious legislative sessions and employed flattering rhetoric when speaking to male-dominated audiences). Moving her son to California in 1871, Clarina Nichols remained intellectually engaged in the work of social reform until her death in 1885, publishing essays in which she subtly shifted from a mother's rights defense to one emphasizing women's equal citizenship in marriage.

Although not a trailblazer in the traditional sense (she was not the first to lecture publicly, nor did she utter the boldest statements), Clarina Nichols clearly played an important role in building a collective women's rights consciousness in Kansas and other states where her ideas circulated. Blackwell and Oertel are to be commended for their efforts to decode her carefully constructed life, and for shedding further light on the complexity and contradictions of the nineteenth-century movement for women's rights. Scholars of Iowa women's history, along with other readers, will find this portrayal of Nichols's path to political engagement of interest as a model for investigating the personal and public lives of Iowa activists.

*The Methodist Experience in America: A History*, volume 1, by Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt. Nashvile: Abingdon Press, 2010. xx, 699 pages. Notes, index. \$50.00 paper.

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When the author of Ecclesiastes wrote that of the making of books, there is no end, she or he probably had in mind books on American Methodism. Every anniversary, schism, or reunion brings another spate, as is the way of denominational histories. Denominational histories are out of fashion, deservedly so, as social history, "lived religion," and more topical subjects seem more compelling, and denominational histories have usually suffered from lack of context — the extreme example being William Harsha's *Story of Iowa*, which despite its title is about Presbyterians in Iowa (although he was ecumenical enough to include United Presbyterians).

Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt laudably build on social history and are always aware of the larger American and ecumenical contexts.

This volume — volume 1 — arrives ten years after volume 2 (a collection of sources), probably some kind of record and an indication of the vagaries of bureaucracies. Volume 2 is outside the purview of this review, except to say that photos of the first lay delegates admitted to the Methodist Episcopal (North) convention include Iowan James Harlan, whose day job was as a U.S. Senator.

*The Methodist Experience* is meant as a textbook for United Methodist seminarians. In terms of accessibility, it only partially succeeds. This is due less to the efforts of the authors than to the nature of institutional histories — and institutions. The tension between institutions and movements accounts for both the problems and the virtues of this book, and this tension plays out differently in different centuries.

If I were teaching this seminary course — and if my students had unlimited book budgets — I would substitute one of the social histories found in footnotes 2 and 3, page 577 — books by Heyrman, Andrews, and Wiggins — on eighteenth-century Methodism. Early Methodism was more movement than institution, and social histories are compelling in a way that institutional histories, including this one, do not seem to be able to be, as they must navigate the first contradictory flag plantings of authority while social histories map changed lives.

The nineteenth century, when virile institutions and rampant movements warily sensed parity, makes for the most compelling reading. Methodists made astonishing progress institutionally, but democratic, abolitionist, and holiness movements kept Methodist institutions off balance. For the nineteenth century, the authors are tracking three African American denominations, two German American, a Northern and Southern, as well as a Methodist Protestant and other Wesleyan spinoffs. They manage to keep all those plates spinning for the 1800s, but lose track in the twentieth century. But the tale is of institutionalization: “Methodism had become an institution-creating church” (135).

By the twentieth century, although movements (fundamentalism, the Social Gospel, civil rights) continued to surface, American Methodism had become so thoroughly institutionalized that the text is preoccupied with an increasingly unwieldy church bureaucracy. As the authors document, the 1937 merger of the Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South, and Methodist Protestant churches and the 1968 merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches are complicated — it takes months after merger to unravel who fits where in the new organizational charts.

The authors are excellent at tracing the importance of race. The price of North-South merger was the creation of a non-geographical “General Conference” that segregated African American congregations

in the new structure. The authors mention Iowa's role as the first predominantly white conference to have an African American bishop.

Iowans John Mott, Annie Wittenmyer, Church of the Nazarene founder Phineas Bresee, Goodwill founder Edgar J. Helms, and long-time national secretary of the Methodist Federation for Social Service Winifred Chappell all make cameo appearances. Cedar Falls is listed as the home of the Evangelical Association's Western Old People's Home. But if space given is an indication, Iowa Methodism's contributions are primarily architectural. Louis Sullivan's design of St. Paul's in Cedar Rapids is admired, but the authors go on for almost a page about Charles City's Trinity United Methodist Church and its architect, Edward Sovik.

A pro-institutional bias can be discerned. Methodist Federation for Social Service radicals who stayed within the Methodist church's parameters are treated more kindly than late twentieth-century conservative critics who flirted with schism. James Kelley, leader of the nineteenth-century Republican Methodists, who challenged the episcopacy on democratic grounds, is dismissed without citing evidence of megalomaniacal intent.

For a book of this import, a bibliography would have been helpful (although a skeleton of one is in the abbreviations). The index, while extensive, is inadequate. Theologian Stanley Hauerwas (529), ethicist John Swomley (500), world religions scholar Diana Eck (540), and the aforementioned Phineas Bresee (320) are mentioned in the text but not in the index, and I suspect my list is incomplete.

Perhaps if the author of *Ecclesiastes* surveyed the American religious scene, the lament would be, of the making of institutions, there is no end. In their monumental attempt to write a denominational history that incorporates social history, Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt have illuminated the potential and the pitfalls of such a project for future historians. Institutions and movements cannot exist without each other, but the landscape is often too small for the both of them.

*Wisconsin's Own: Twenty Remarkable Homes*, by M. Caren Connolly and Louis Wasserman, photography by Zane Williams. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2010. xv, 304 pp. Color photographs, drawings, maps, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.

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*Wisconsin's Own* has the weight, feel, smell, and full-color cover of a coffee-table book, but it is much more. Beginning with an 1854 octagon