

One Woman's Political Journey: Kate Barnard and Social Reform, 1875-1930, by Lynn Musslewhite and Suzanne Jones Crawford. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xii, 231 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Victoria Bissell Brown is professor of history at Grinnell College. She is the author of *The Education of Jane Addams* (2004).

Kate Barnard is not an entirely likeable figure in the history of the Progressive Era, despite her achievements as Oklahoma's first Commissioner of Charities and Corrections between 1908 and 1915. To their credit, Lynn Musslewhite and Suzanne Jones Crawford have written a fair-minded, unsentimental study of Barnard's public career. They trace Barnard's legislative contributions to social justice in early Oklahoma state history while acknowledging her support for racial segregation, her alienation from female political culture and woman suffrage, and her histrionic personal and political style.

In *One Woman's Political Journey*, the first book-length biography of Barnard, the authors use the limited personal sources available to sketch their subject's early life as an itinerant, motherless child in Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. The bust-and-boom career of Barnard's restless father bequeathed an Irish Catholic heritage, considerable ambition, and (ultimately) an inheritance upon his pretty, petite, never-to-marry daughter. But the authors' focus is not on Kate Barnard's personal life or internal motivations. They trace her public path to becoming in 1908 the first woman elected to statewide office in the United States and document her subsequent legislative struggles to win passage of child labor and compulsory education laws, establish protective legislation for workers, and create a separate system of juvenile courts and corrections. The authors go into particular detail on two scandals that a crusading Kate Barnard exposed: mistreatment of Oklahoma prisoners housed in Kansas jails and whites' theft of Indian orphans' landholdings. When the latter campaign threatened the property interests of the male leaders of Barnard's Democratic Party, her political fortunes shifted; by 1915, she was without office or allies.

The authors convey the drama of Barnard's political life, but their narrow focus on her actions does not offer a broader context for Oklahoma political history. Readers knowledgeable about Iowa history must keep in mind that Oklahoma was a markedly different, decidedly southern and western, locale, where William Jennings Bryan, not Theodore Roosevelt, was the icon of reform, where racism and populism shaped social activism, and where the Democratic Party, not the Republican, claimed the mantle of progressivism. More analysis of Oklahoma political history would have aided the authors' sincere attempt to pre-

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

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