

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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