

deserves special commendation for its thoroughness and detail and is particularly valuable for an edited work of this kind. Brinks's book is a welcome addition to the expanding historiography of Dutch-American ethnic studies.

Material Culture and People's Art among the Norwegians in America, edited by Marion Nelson. Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1994. ix, 228 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$30.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY APRIL R. SCHULTZ, ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Marion Nelson's edited volume provides a wonderful and much-needed interdisciplinary study of material culture among Norwegian Americans. I have learned in my own research on Norwegian Americans that some of the most poignant evidence is in the form of material objects. Nelson, director of the Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, points out that Norwegian Americans were very early concerned with collecting and preserving material objects, yet there has been little in print that interprets those objects themselves. This volume is an important beginning.

Topics of essays in the collection range from Nelson's analysis of collection and preservation among Norwegian Americans to interpretations of architecture, clothing, arts, and objects, and the life of a local artist. In his introductory essay, Nelson offers a fascinating account of the origins of the Norwegian-American Museum and the meaning of collecting and preserving immigrant objects, both as a tradition brought with immigrants from Scandinavia and as an effort at cultural legitimation in America. Reidar Bakken analyzes acculturation in buildings and farmsteads in Coon Valley, Wisconsin, from 1850 to 1930. In this well-illustrated and well-documented piece, Bakken argues convincingly that the architecture demonstrates "a gradual adoption of American customs" rather than a "rapid Americanization in building practices" (73). In a similar piece, Kenneth Breisch argues that Norwegian immigrants to Bosque County, Texas, preserved some important elements of community traditions while pragmatically adapting new forms and technologies from their Anglo-American neighbors. The next two essays deal with even more "everyday" matters such as dress, arts, and objects. Carol Coburn offers a compelling argument about Norwegian-American immigrant dress, a much under-analyzed element of immigrant life. Coburn focuses specifically on immigrant dress as expressions of group membership and status. M. A. Madson provides a historic, economic, and demographic analysis of vinaigrettes,

"little immigrant treasures" that immigrants from Norway valued enough to include in their voyage from the homeland, rendering them "precious reminders of the culture and loved ones left behind" (161). Although they were much more common in Denmark than in Norway, these commemorative or betrothal gifts were more prevalent among Norwegian immigrants to America than among Danish immigrants.

The last two essays shift to the more rarefied focus of fine art and church altars. Carlin Hibbard recounts the rise to prominence of a poor Norwegian immigrant who became a celebrated local artist in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, in the late nineteenth century. Nurtured by a strong immigrant community and the needs of a frontier community for art in churches, public buildings, and homes, S. O. Lund provides an example of the midwestern artist who retained strong ties to his local community. Kristin M. Anderson analyzes another kind of art—church altars as folk expression. Anderson's piece provides an interesting link between the strong and numerous Norwegian-American Lutheran churches, their immediate need for furniture and paintings that would not prove too costly, and the proliferation of "folk" artists from the community who filled that need.

This volume should prove fascinating for anyone interested in the material objects they see on farmsteads, in old photographs, or at the immigrant museum. But it should also prove useful for scholars and students of immigration in general and material culture in particular, both for the information and interpretations the authors provide, but also for its methodology.

Danish Emigration to the U.S.A., edited by Birgit Flemming Larsen and Henning Bender; translated by Karen Veien. Aalborg, Denmark: Danes Worldwide Archives in collaboration with the Danish Society for Emigration History, 1992. 246 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes. \$15.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PLAYFORD V. THORSON, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

This collection of fourteen essays by sixteen authors concentrates on midwestern settlements. Topics include Danish-American language, libraries, historiography, and churches. The essays are narrative and in the humanist tradition.

There are also essays on organizations in Denmark and the United States established to collect, preserve, and publish the story of Danes in America. Henning Bender's essay, "The Danes Worldwide Archives, 1932-1992," describes the efforts of Max Henius in Denmark to document the story of those who emigrated. The Henius estate, with help from the city of Aalborg and its university, provides a comfortable

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