



Strangers at Home: Amish and Mennonite Women in History (Center Books in Anabaptist Studies)

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This collection of original essays focuses on the rich, historically diverse, and often misunderstood experiences of Amish, Mennonite, and other women of Anabaptist traditions across 400 years. Equal parts sociology, religious history, and gender studies, the book explores the changing roles and issues surrounding Anabaptist women in communities ranging from sixteenth-century Europe to contemporary North America. Gathered under the overarching theme of the insider/outsider distinction, the essays discuss, among other topics:

- How womanhood was defined in early Anabaptist societies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and how women served as central figures by convening meetings across class boundaries or becoming religious leaders
- How nineteenth-century Amish tightened the connections among the individual, the family, the household, and the community by linking them into a shared framework with the father figure at the helm
- The changing work world and domestic life of Mennonite women in the three decades following World War II
- The recent ascendancy of antimodernism and plain dress among the Amish
- The special difficulties faced by scholars who try to apply a historical or sociological method to the very same cultural subgroups from which they derive

The essays in this collection follow a fascinating journey through time and place to give voice to women who are often characterized as the "quiet in the land." Their voices and their experiences demonstrate the power of religion to shape identity and social practice.

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Editorial Review

Review

Strangers at Home makes a major contribution to our understanding of Anabaptist history and the ongoing construction of Anabaptist identity. Moreover, in investigating the role of religion and ethnicity in framing the choices available to individuals and communities, the essays in *Strangers at Home* consider the historical construction of gender in Anabaptist cultures in the larger context of women's history and, in so doing, question assumptions about the field of women's history itself.

(Karen M. Johnson-Weiner *Mennonite Quarterly Review*)

Amish and Mennonite women occupy a unique niche in rural America, and the intricate, complex essays in *Strangers at Home* demonstrates a maturity in their study.... The essays are uniformly sophisticated, interesting, and worthwhile.

(Rebecca Sharpless *Agricultural History*)

This work is significant both for its breadth... and for offering glimpses into the varieties of Mennonite and Amish life.

(Rachel Waltner Goosen *Annals of Iowa*)

A unique and significant contribution not only to the body of scholarship on Anabaptist women, but to the study of women's experiences in ethnoreligious groups in general.

(Erin Roth *Der Reggebog*)

These essays add to the diversification of the historiography of women, raising in fresh ways questions of ethnicity, religion, and individual-community relationships. Their publication is a milestone in Anabaptist scholarship.

(Steven M. Nolt *Journal of American History*)

This collection of essays is an extraordinary contribution to the scholarly study of Anabaptist women.

(Laura H. Weaver *Utopian Studies*)

All who follow the invitation of the young woman featured on the dust jacket to explore the experiences of the women who share the predicament finding themselves *Strangers at Home*, will be greatly enriched.

(Lucille Marr *Journal of Mennonite Studies*)

This collection represents a fresh and much needed approach to Anabaptist studies.

(Esther Epp-Tiessen *Conrad Grebel Review*)

These path-breaking essays make a stellar contribution to the scholarship of gender roles in contemporary Anabaptist communities.

(Donald B. Kraybill, Messiah College)

About the Author

Kimberly D. Schmidt is an assistant professor of history and director of the Washington Community Scholars Center of Eastern Mennonite University. **Diane Zimmerman Umble** is chair and an associate professor of communications at Millersville University. **Steven D. Reschly** is an associate professor of history at Truman State University.

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Raymond Blalock:

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Jonathan Peterson:

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