

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 ascendency 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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