



Undaunted: A Norwegian Woman in Frontier Texas (Tarleton State University Southwestern Studies in the Humanities)

Charles H. Russell

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Elise Waerenskjold is known to fans of Texas women writers as "the lady with the pen," from the title of a book of her writings. A forward-looking journalist, she sent letters and articles back to Norway that encouraged others to follow her footsteps to Texas, where a small colony of Norwegian settlers were making a new life alongside—but distinct from—other European immigrants.

Undaunted is the first full biography of Waerenskjold during her Texas years, a life story that shows much about Texas, especially in the Norwegian colonies, from 1847 until near the end of the century. Moreover, it tells the story of a strong and independent thinker who championed women's rights, was pro-Union and against slavery (though her husband was in the Confederate army and was subsequently murdered in Reconstruction-era violence), and left an intriguing body of writing about life on the edges of Texas settlement.

Charles Russell's vivid account of Waerenskjold describes not only her influence among her countrymen but also her own life, which was a saga of considerable drama itself. It offers a clear and entertaining window onto immigrant life in Texas and the issues that shaped women's lives and elicited their talents in an earlier century.

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