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Review of Plains Folk: A Commonplace of the Great Plains

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scholar will not find much of use here. Moreover, the essays contain some peculiar assertions—for example, that the hamburger was “invented” in the nineteenth century by a Kansan and that the most common form of plains folktale is the legend, while it is obvious to even the untrained observer that the most frequently appearing folktale form anywhere in America is the joke. The style of the essays is casual and comfortable, as if the authors were discussing matters with a friend over a glass of beer.

Not every book has to be scholarly but every book should be engaging, and *Plains Folk* is certainly that.

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Plains Folk: A Commonplace of the Great Plains.

By Jim Hoy and Tom Isern. Drawings by Don Johnson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987. Preface, map, illustrations, indices. xiv + 200 pp. \$17.95.

Plains Folk is a compilation of ninety-six human-interest essays written for a syndicated column published in newspapers from Texas to North Dakota. The reprinted columns deal with tidbits of history, folklore, agriculture, and humor from the plains region. The columns are brief and without documentation, as one would expect from a newspaper column.

The columns, and thus the book, are written for the popular and casual reader; the serious