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1990

## Review of Folklife Annual 1987

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Ireland, Lynn M., "Review of Folklife Annual 1987" (1990). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 479.

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*Folklife Annual 1987*. Edited by Alan Jabbour and James Hardin. Washington: Library of Congress, 1988. Color and black and white photographs, illustrations, notes, contributor's notes. 159 pp. \$23.00.

Those of us disheartened by what seems to be an ever-increasing homogenization of American culture will find solace and hope in the pages of this attractive, well-designed book. Produced by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, the *Folklife Annual* celebrates "the fact of our national diversity." Great Plains readers will be encouraged to discover a number of pieces directly related to this region.

The color photograph that spills across the title page spread shows two costumed Indian women gazing out onto a shimmering, feathery mass of powwow fancy dancers. It's a totally Indian picture—save for the row of aluminum-and-webbing lawn chairs in the foreground. Traditional expressive culture—folklife—of course exists within the larger framework of American mass culture. The pages of the annual are filled with examples of "strategies for survival" in this sometimes "hostile world."

A portion of our national diversity is preserved at the Library of Congress, the broad resources of which have been beautifully utilized to create a century-spanning visual context for Vanessa Brown and Barre Toelken's examination of the American Indian powwow. Written from the perspective of both powwow participant (Brown) and the folklorist (Toelken), the essay provides a useful explanation of what goes on at powwows in the West and the northern Plains. Non-Indian readers who have attended (and been somewhat mystified by) powwows, or seek an introduction to this dynamic and

colorful feature on the Plains cultural landscape, will find this essay a treasure-trove. Many of the contemporary color photographs were made at the 1983 Omaha Indian Powwow at Macy, Nebraska. An accompanying piece focusing on Native events in Eastern Canada reiterates the fact of diversity, not only between but among tribal groups.

The 1987 annual reveals folklife research to be as diverse as the traditional cultures it studies. Roger Abrahams's discussion of Afro-American folk tales, and the role of Joel Chandler Harris, author of "Uncle Remus," in making some of those tales known by, and acceptable to, white America suggests we have far to go "in understanding the systematic character as well as the vigor and integrity of [Afro-American] culture."

Erika Brady's investigation of private rituals of grief centers on the ways these individual acts resemble and differ from a community's sanctioned ways of coping with death.

The strengthening of community traditions, and the handing down of those traditions through institutionalized "ethnic heritage" schools, is the focus of four brief reports excerpted from larger field studies. Plains readers will be particularly interested in the account of German-Russian ethnic studies in North Dakota by Timothy Kloberdanz.

Jeff Todd Tilton presents a compelling account of the song-sermons of electrifying preacher-poet C. L. Franklin (father of "soul queen" Aretha). James McNutt's interview with folklorist-entertainer-activist John Henry Faulk recounts the collection of black folklore when such activity was decidedly incorrect—both politically and socially. Annotated excerpts from the interview would have made this piece more accessible to the non-folklorist.

*Folklife Annual 1987* provides diverse, stimulating, and entertaining reading for anyone interested in the American cultural scene.

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