section of notes which discuss the history of many of the riddles included in his book.

On the negative side, folklore publications are used rather indiscriminately. Hodgepodge collections such as *Folklore on the American Land* or *Zickery Zan* are given equal status with more significant works like *Kaiser und Abt*, *Folklore from the Schoharie Hills*, or *Up Cutshin and Down Greasy*. More importantly, Schwartz does not seem to respect texts found in folklore collections and collected in the field. Several texts have been "improved" in various ways; to Schwartz's credit, he identifies the occurrences of such alterations. Factual errors also appear (such as the assertion that rebus riddles, among others, are no longer used), along with an unfortunate antiquarian attitude in which folklore is associated solely with the past.

None of these criticisms, of course, matter much to Mr. Schwartz, who has designed his book for children rather than for folklorists. Although he has not presented the material in exactly the same way as a folklorist would, he has done far better than most other children's authors who deal with folklore.

"Sounds So Good to Me": The Bluesman's Story.


Reviewed by Gregory Hansen.

Barry Lee Pearson insightfully tells the bluesman's story in "Sounds So Good to Me": The Bluesman's Story. From interviews with blues musicians and from their life stories, Pearson gleans common themes as he examines the archetypal stuff that blues legends are made from: first guitars, church/blues tensions, rip-offs, success, alcohol, violence, and "the
feeling" underlying the music.

As a record of the musicians' lives and experiences with music, "Sounds So Good to Me" complements previous studies of the history, musical form, and poetry of the blues. The study is not solely an ethnography, but also a presentation of the artistry inherent in the musicians' life stories. In general, Pearson is successful in showing each narrative's beauty, although the plethora of interview texts requires a patient reader.

In addition to the musicians' lives, the tape-recorded interview is a tacit subject throughout the book. The excerpts presented have been influenced by previous interview questions, and Pearson discusses how prior interviews have shaped the form of the life stories. One aspect of the interview's influence upon ethnographic studies is not considered by Pearson--the role that choice of people to interview, and how this choice can affect the researcher's conclusions. Pearson avoids interviewing most of the big-name musicians, and I was left wondering how his study results might have differed had these artists been included.

Some of Pearson's conclusions are also shaped by his view of white America's experience with the music. He states categorically that white imitators are "notable for their sincerity," but unable "to achieve deep expression" in playing the blues. This generalization is a bit careless, for the differences between white imitators and traditional blues musicians are more matters of instrumental style and vocal timbre than matters of the soul. Making music is a learned skill -- there are no innate blues genes -- and everyone experiences deep emotions that can be expressed musically. To view any artistic statement as the exclusive domain of any group of people is to open the door for a romanticized, patronizing, or stereotypical attitude.

The slightly tenuous conclusions derived from
an implicit view of black vs. white culture are far overshadowed by Pearson's other findings. He sensitively explores what are often stereotypical notions about the bluesman, questioning some common misconceptions. "Sounds So Good to Me" is an engaging, original work, valuable for its eloquent discussion of the bluesman's story.


Reviewed by L. C. Rudolph.

In summer of 1826 a member of a very prominent American family joined the Shakers. William S. Byrd was educated and was above average in wealth. He was twenty years old when he entered the Shaker community of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. The backbone of this book is a collection of nineteen letters which William S. Byrd wrote from this Shaker village to his father, who was a federal judge in Ohio. Nine other closely related documents are added, making this a small but highly select body of primary material.

William S. Byrd was a true convert. As a Believer, he chose to live the life separated from worldly ways, and to "bear the cross" of abstention from the sensual world. His father was also a Shaker in principle, but was never quite able or willing to put his religious principles into practice. The correspondence between this articulate father and son, reflecting their concurrent dialogues with both adherents and opponents of the Shakers, offers a religious study in a very lively form.

William S. Byrd was an affectionate member of his natural family. The correspondence is heavy