

encouraged, or coerced by scholars (who were coerced in turn?). We learn much about creativity under stress in this book, but we learn it from the results rather than from the individual creative process.

Jens Lund. **Flatheads and Spoonneys: Fishing for a Living in the Ohio River Valley**. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995. Pp. xiv + 223, bibliography, photographs, appendices. \$27.95 cloth.

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Jens Lund's *Flatheads and Spoonneys: Fishing for a Living in the Ohio River Valley* renders a detailed ethnographic account of the folklore and folklife of the commercial fisherpeople living in the Ohio River Valley. It provides one of the first comprehensive folkloristic considerations of the area by depicting both the traditional continuities and the innovative characteristics found among the river's inhabitants. Wending its way from Pennsylvania to Illinois, the Ohio River has provided commercial fishermen and fisherwomen with a source of food and income since the pioneer days. Lund opens his book with an account of the river's commercial fishing history, noting its importance to early Native American groups, and to the explorers and the pioneers. Each chapter examines the various aspects of fishing, such as the types of fish, the construction and uses of fishing boats, nets, hooks, lines, and traps found in the area, as well as the marketing, cooking, and consumption of fish. The chapter "River Folklore" especially details oral performances found in the lower Ohio Valley and includes personal experience narratives, humorous tales, jokes, and songs complete with notations.

For Lund, the fishing gear and techniques comprise the most distinctive features of the fisher folk character. Rather than limiting himself to isolating and describing these elements, he discusses the problems associated with river identity. Many of his informants are plagued by poverty and the ghostly image of a fortuitous past which they believe will never return. By demonstrating the presence of both tradition and innovation in fisher folk gear and techniques, Lund illustrates the ways in which the fishermen's and fisherwomen's lives are not simply mired in the past. He shows how those unwilling to adopt new methods simply would and could not make a living, observing that currently, those who can and do fish for a living derive a sense of pride and independence from their ability. Based on years of fieldwork stretching back to the 1970s, the book is replete with stories, quotations, examples of local dialect, and vignettes reconstructed from Lund's field notes. Despite the richness of the text, however, the reader lacks a

sense of what and how exactly Lund's informants feel about fishing, and what being a fisherman or fisherwoman means to them. The book, however, is extremely useful to anyone studying this geographical area, especially people wishing for an in-depth description of the occupational folklore and folklife of fishing.

Eileen Oktavec. **Answered Prayers: Miracles and Milagros Along the Borders.** Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1995. Pp. xxvi + 239, illustrations. \$35.00 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

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In *Answered Prayers*, Eileen Oktavec summarizes more than two decades of studying milagros—tiny metal figures attached to saints' statues in prayer or thanksgiving. Through careful study of these little artifacts, Oktavec explores the intangible religious and cultural life of the people of the Sonoran desert. She sheds light on the interpretation of prayer, petition, and negotiation between the devout and the saints, and on the ways in which milagros and their uses create connections between the mostly Native American and Hispanic people who follow this custom. Oktavec painstakingly covers virtually all aspects of a milagro's existence, including their creation, use, and design. The appendix contains tables which categorize the milagros by type and by year. She discusses the most common designs of each type of milagro as well as the unique figures whose forms show the individuality with which this type of devotion is approached. Oktavec's *Answered Prayers* contains the most comprehensive gathering of available milagro statistics, and will serve as a primary source.

At the heart of *Answered Prayers* are not the milagro figures themselves, but the manner in which these figures illuminate the beliefs, hopes, and fears of the people who use them. To understand the faith that the milagro represents, Oktavec conducted scores of interviews with the people involved in every aspect of production, marketing, use, and disposal of the figurines, ranging from the artisans who craft them to the priests of the churches where they are displayed. On the one hand, the fieldwork and discussion lend a sense of immediacy to the quotations and illustrations that are provided in the book. On the other, they seem to preclude a deeper exploration of the ways in which the various meanings of milagros and their uses may overlap, converge, or even conflict in the viewpoint of a single