a dramatic script. Most of the events Davis analyzes are, however, only metaphorically theatrical, and it may be more useful to accept the parade as a genre akin to but not the same as theater. Davis' last chapter underscores this distinction, in a summary comparison of the characteristics of parade makers, parade-making occasions, and parade styles. Davis' study offers some astonishing insights into post-Revolutionary life in Philadelphia, and the social and political make-up of a city on its way to industrialization and urbanization. The once open streets offered room for intentional or implicit demonstrations of or against power, and only the architectural changes of the 20th century reduced the effectiveness of the parade as a means of communicating a given group's understanding of itself relative to others.


Reviewed by Gregory Hansen.

Studies using oral history have sometimes been criticized for describing rather than interpreting folklife, and the study of folklife itself can be criticized for often avoiding the negative aspects of a community's history and culture. Lynwood Montell's most recent work, Killings, can not be indicted on either of these charges. In this book he successfully uses tape-recorded interviews to study the history of violence within a four county region located along the border of Kentucky and Tennessee. From the 1880's until the 1940's this region was characterized by an unusually high number of homicides. The reason for these frequent kill-
ings, Montell hypothesizes, is a subculture of violence within which the area's residents regarded violence as an acceptable means of solving disputes.

Montell studies his subject ethnographically by presenting the insiders' views of the killings. His use of the term "killing" shows he is sensitive to the residents' dominant attitude toward the region's homicides. "Murder" is too strong a word, he explains, for the local residents generally do not consider most of the homicides criminal acts. Montell describes the region's verifiable killings within their historical and cultural context by outlining the history, geography, and economy of the region. The narratives on killings are interwoven into the ethnographic description, each story following a chronological order.

The book's introduction and first chapter include a staggering number of names, dates, places, historical details, and scholarly concerns. Reading these first thirty-five pages is similar to sorting out the names in the opening chapters of a lengthy Russian novel. His compact opening is also tedious reading because all of the names for persons and places are pseudonyms. He has justifiable reasons for protecting the people he interviewed, but it is difficult to understand why he is disguising the place names, as the region is fairly easy to pinpoint on a map. Although Montell organizes his background material clearly and poses his research questions concisely, the mixture of historical and cultural details with the theoretical concerns is not blended together deftly.

Following the first chapter, the narrators tell the stories of the killings as Montell presents excerpts from his interviews. To their credit, neither he nor his narrators apologize for the graphic details of the stories' violence, nor do they sensationalize the events. As a result, the narratives record the vivid de-
scriptions maintained in the oral tradition and appear to portray honest attitudes toward the killings. Montell has a penchant for allowing his interviewees to narrate and comment upon their own history, and the long texts transcribed in Killings work successfully toward this goal.

Although Montell's presentation of the narratives shows that individuals provide interpretive commentary within their stories, the book's strongest section remains the author's own ideas about the region's violence. Montell brings his conclusions together in his final chapter by answering questions raised by hypothesizing a subculture of violence within the region. Showing the attitudes of the area's residents concerning law enforcement, weapons, domestic life, illicit activities, and other aspects of their lives, he demonstrates that violence was tolerated if not condoned as a means of settling disagreements within the area studied. Placing these conclusions about the State Line Country within the larger context of the southern United States, Montell argues that the high degree of violence in the South results primarily from these isolated subcultures of violence.

Killings is a valuable study for sociologists and geographers as well as for historians and folklorists. For anyone using oral history, Montell's book clearly shows that the first important step in using oral history to interpret human interactions is to propose important research questions. By seeking answers to serious and possibly uncomfortable questions, Montell again demonstrates the value of using oral history to interpret a people's history and culture.