

Don Yoder. **Discovering American Folklife: Studies in Ethnic, Religious, and Regional Culture.** Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990. Pp. xi + 314, photographs, bibliography, list of dissertations directed, index. \$44.95 cloth.

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Published collections of essays such as this assemblage of articles by Don Yoder can serve at least two purposes: they can bring together in a convenient form a number of important essays which are otherwise difficult to access, and they can honor the author in a tangible way by showing the wide range of his or her contributions to scholarship over a period of many years of research.

The first goal is certainly met in this volume. The articles reprinted range in date from 1958 to 1989 and come from a variety of sources: journals, books, and exhibition catalogs. They also meet the second goal by covering diverse topics. They are arranged under the following headings: Foundations of Folklife Studies, Genres of Folklife, and Explorations in a Region. Included are "The Folklife Studies Movement" of 1963, which Henry Glassie, in his graceful Foreword, rightly calls Don Yoder's "folklife manifesto," as well as the equally important "Folklife Studies in American Scholarship" of 1976. Other articles deal with folk religion, folk medicine, traditional cookery, sectarian costume research, saint's legends, witch tales, fraktur and, last but not least, sauerkraut.

Anyone concerned with trying to investigate the range of subjects customarily included under the rubric "folklife" will find significant materials here. It is important to note, in the first place, that Don Yoder states that folklife research is the study of folk culture which is "basically, (although not exclusively) rural and preindustrial. Obviously, it is the opposite of the mass-produced, mechanized, popular culture of the twentieth century" (25). Moreover, the topics he chooses to treat in this volume—whose title, it must be remembered, is *Discovering American Folklife*—definitely are part of rural and preindustrial society. Don Yoder's concept of folklife studies contrasts sharply with that of many recent writers who concentrate on "mass-produced, mechanized, popular culture of the twentieth century" and label that "folklife." In the second place, Don Yoder includes a number of oral genres such as saint's legends, witch tales, and white spirituals more frequently treated as "folklore," yet oral genres are certainly part of the folk culture on which folklife studies focus.

This book likewise serves to honor one who can truly be called one of the "Masters of Material Culture." It is a testimonial to a lifetime of dedicated research. In addition to reprinting seminal articles, it includes the truly impressive "Selected Bibliography of Don Yoder, 1944-1990," containing 84 entries. It is a testimonial to an abiding love for a region and its people. It is a testimonial to an inspiring teacher who has guided a host of doctoral students and directed many noteworthy dissertations, for not only does Don Yoder speak gracefully of his students, but he also provides a list of the Ph.D. dissertations he has directed between 1962 and 1990. It is testimonial to a devoted editor

whose mark on American folklife research cannot be overestimated. It is also a testimonial to a leader in the establishing of folklife studies in the United States and one who has been a constant source of inspiration to others over a period of decades.

Richard E. Meyer, ed. **Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture.** Foreword by James Deetz. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989. Pp. xiv + 347, photographs, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$44.95 cloth.

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The study of cemeteries and gravemarkers in the United States and the relationship of these artifacts to their American cultural contexts was the impetus behind the formation of the Association for Gravestone Studies (AGS) in 1977. Since that time, members of the AGS, both academic and nonacademic, have met annually to present papers, tour cemeteries, and engage in meaningful dialogue about the importance of these artifacts as an index of cultural attitudes, values, and beliefs. The inspiration for this kind of study comes from the pioneering work of Harriette Merrifield Forbes in the early part of the century, whose *Gravestones of Early New England and the Men Who Made Them, 1653-1800* (1927), has become a classic.

One of the problems of the AGS was that it met and continues to meet exclusively in the northeastern region of the country, glorifying the *older*, more *authentic* gravestones of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England and Pennsylvania. An appendage to the AGS meetings provided a solution to AGS exclusivity—the establishment of the permanent Cemeteries and Gravestones section of the American Culture Association (ACA) by Richard Meyer. Unlike the AGS, the Cemeteries and Gravestones section of the ACA included a wide range of material from various parts of the country.

Richard Meyer's book, *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture*, perpetuates the serious study done by his predecessors. *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers* contains twelve essays by leading scholars in the field of cemetery studies who presented papers at the 1986 meetings of the ACA. In his introduction, Meyer reviews the available literature on cemetery studies, pointing out the overemphasis of the older New England materials and the neglect of newer and more contemporary materials from other regions of the country. Meyer consciously chose to include essays representative of American pluralism. There are essays on gravemarkers from the Pacific northwest, Upland south, Carolina Piedmont, New Orleans, Afro-American markers in Rhode Island, Zuni, Mormon, and Navajo cemeteries in New Mexico, western Pennsylvania cemeteries, and a Mexican-American community in Texas.

Diversity of region is not the only strength of this book. The essays contained in *Cemeteries* also demonstrate a variety of approaches, some focusing