

at the Wisconsin Folk Museum at Mt. Horeb. His book effectively combines public sector work and basic folklore scholarship.

The book includes an informative introduction by W.K. McNeil which outlines a brief but concise history of American folkloristics, and introduces some of the major concepts of folklore collection and study with an emphasis on "jokelore."

The main body of the work contains jokes collected about various ethnic groups and occupations common to the upper Midwest region. Each section is supplemented with brief historical notes on the group in question, and the jokes are presented as they were recorded. There are also numerous footnotes on potentially obscure vocabulary and references within the jokes themselves. Leary provides us with information, photos, and locations of each of his informants, and each of the jokes is well documented in the collection notes.

Of the two, *Hometown Humor, U.S.A.* is much less satisfying for the folklorist. The book is written as light reading for the non-scholar, and the only attempt to document each joke is that of including the name and residence of each teller. The jokes are also heavily edited. It is moderately successful as a book for light reading only, but holds little promise for the folklorist.

Midwestern Folk Humor succeeds very well as a non-theoretical collection of folk humor. Leary states this as his intention, and he achieves this goal admirably. The book is enjoyable to the professional folklorist and a potentially useful resource. I have used it successfully to illustrate discussions on folk humor in an introductory course on American folklore.

Laurel Horton, ed. **Uncoverings 1989**. Volume 10 of the Research Papers of the American Quilt Study Group. San Francisco: American Quilt Study Group, 1990. Pp. 167, preface, index.

Laurel Horton, ed. **Uncoverings 1990**. Volume 11 of the Research Papers of the American Quilt Study Group. San Francisco: American Quilt Study Group, 1991. Pp. 219, preface, index.

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More folklorists should know about the American Quilt Study Group and their annual publication, *Uncoverings*, which inspired me to become involved with the organization. AQSG's annual seminar brings folk artists together with scholars from an impressive array of disciplines and concerns,

including History, Textiles, English, Performance Studies and Folklore. Papers presented at each seminar are then published as that year's edition of *Uncoverings*.

Both *Uncoverings* 1989 and 1990 offer a sampling of the broad range of perspectives one might expect from such a collaboration. Most, however, deal in some way with the "relationship between the private and the public aspects of quilting," as Laurel Horton notes in her 1989 preface. And all, especially in the 1989 *Uncoverings*, deal with matters of concern to folklorists. From the 1989 seminar, essays by Gunn, Sienkiewicz, and Meyer are especially important for their contributions to scholarship on tradition.

"Quilts For Milady's Boudoir," from *Uncoverings 1989*, is a wonderful commentary on negotiations of gender and tradition. Interpreting the "good old colony times" portrayed in the quilt revival of the early twentieth century, Virginia Gunn describes progressive and creative elements of nostalgia. Turn of the century women used sensual images of the "colonial woman" to embrace a sensuality and "moderne" ideas then associated with the "Art Deco." They adapted both the revived tradition, and the newest fashion, to the values and aesthetics of their own lives.

Eleanor Hamilton Sienkiewicz's paper "The Marketing of Mary Evans" traces the ascription of several anonymous "Baltimore Album" quilts to an individual artist, and describes the effects this ascription had on heightening those quilts' validation (and valuation) as art. Yet despite an impossible number of quilts attributed to Mary Evans, "the only evidence of [Evans's] quilting activity . . . is an unfinished block." An entertaining piece of scholarly detective work, this essay explores the sliding relations between folk art and elite art.

Barbara Brackman has adapted Fred Kniffen's methods of folk housing research to "signature" quilts carrying the name of each contributor, and often the date and place of manufacture. The concerns of the historic-geographic method work well applied to these more portable artifacts, in which the development and diffusion of such aspects as motifs, techniques, and aesthetics reflect development and diffusion of the groups themselves.

Suellen Meyer's paper on the use of sewing machines in nineteenth century quilts reconfirms that technology and adaptation have always been central to traditional arts. During the nineteenth century, many quilts featured prominently visible machine stitching as an indicator of its maker's pride of ownership, and mastery of machine work. By the turn of this century, leisure sewing time, and not technology, was at a premium, and machine quilting lost its glamour. Scholars of innovation in tradition will be interested by "Early Influences of the Sewing Machine and Visible Machine Stitching on Nineteenth Century Quilts."

Three authors have made extensive use of oral histories in their research. "Nebraska Quiltmakers: 1870-1940" combines oral histories, historical documents, and the results of a quilt history and documentation program to compile profiles of quiltmakers, especially pioneer and emigrant women, and the role of quilts in their private and shared lives. Debra Ballard then explores women's shared lives by tracing the functions and history of a single quilting group over a span of fifty years. She contrasts the cooperation, mutual support and self-determination of the quilting group with the hierarchy and relative isolation of most members' lives. Nancilu B. Burdick's "The Julia Boyer Reinstein Collection" focuses on the life and legacy of one quilt collector, and demonstrates the meanings and stories that quilts may contain even for those who don't make them.

Jane Przbysz offers a materialist feminist approach to quilted garments and quilted garment "style shows." In "The Body En(w)raptured: Contemporary Quilted Garments," Przbysz discusses the fanciful garments made for these shows as ways in which their makers both affirm, and mock, definitions of the feminine which assume a "male gaze." Despite constraints often imposed by the shows' coordinators on such matters as the garment's "theme," (which must follow that of the show) or sizing (Size ten. Period.), garment quilters are able to use creativity, humor, and symbolism to appropriate and redefine the feminine.

Finally, Gail Andrews Trechsel's "Mourning Quilts in America" examines quilts in women's role as mourners. Since the nineteenth century, making and viewing memorial quilts has allowed survivors a vehicle for otherwise intangible memories and unresolved emotions. Trechsel demonstrates the continued use of quilts in the healing process through a discussion of several modern mourning quilts, including the NAMES Project Quilt in memory of AIDS victims, and several quilts made in response to the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle.

While *Uncoverings 1990* contains no single essay as important as those of Gunn, Sienkiewicz, or Meyer, the volume is well worth reading. This issue can be recommended to most students of gender, material history, and popular culture.

Kristen Langellier's "Contemporary Quiltmaking in Maine: Re-Fashioning Femininity" examines the context of the guild meeting itself, and how it affects members' lives. She discusses members' expressions of personal and gendered identities, showing that these aspects of identity are negotiated not only through the act of quilting, but through the representation of that act.

Joyce Peaden's paper on "The Multi-Color Pieced Sails of Mindano and The Sulu Archipelago" is interesting, but a teaser. She introduces the reader to this Philippino-Muslim art in a very general, and primarily historical, context.

Three articles look at different aspects of quilt patterns available through the popular press. Merikay Waldvogells "The Marketing of Anne Orr's Quilts" compares 1920s and 1930s strategies of marketing quilt patterns. While some quilts were designed and marketed as signals of sophistication, others identified the reader as traditional and thrifty. Jan Stelik draws connections between political, artistic, and economic trends in the '20s and '30s, and the quilt patterns and contests of the Omaha World-Herald during that period. Wilene Smith's research on quilt patterns available through turn-of-the-century "advertising magazines" helps to demystify the distribution of patterns, their names, and other quilting traditions.

Three essays address concerns of quilt experts: In another effort to demystify quilt research, Elizabeth Richards and two of her students examine research models in material history, and argue that in order to study and archive information about quilts more uniformly, such models should be adapted to quilt research. Nancy Gibson Tuckhorn, of the DAR museum, has studied trends in quilt donations to the DAR, as well as reasons given by donors. Tuckhorn finds both a correspondence to political events of the time, and a concern with preserving family traditions. Barbara Phillippi's "Pre-1940 Quilt Tops: Their Status and Fate in New York State" shows us preservation at odds with tradition. While quilt experts recommend that unfinished quilt tops be left as is, to preserve historical value, many owners prefer that the quilt be made functional.

Descriptions and past issues of *Uncoverings* are available and include articles on competing cultural values at quilt festivals, ideological uses of quilts, their use in the construction of group and individual identity, and other themes of interest to folklorists. The American Quilt Study Group also publishes short "technical guides" on quilt research, and maintains an extensive—and ever growing—archive of books, films, articles, surveys, interviews and other documentation on every imaginable aspect of quilts, quilting and related topics. To order *Uncoverings*, or for more information and a publications list from AQSG, write to: American Quilt Study Group, 660 Mission St. Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94105-4007.