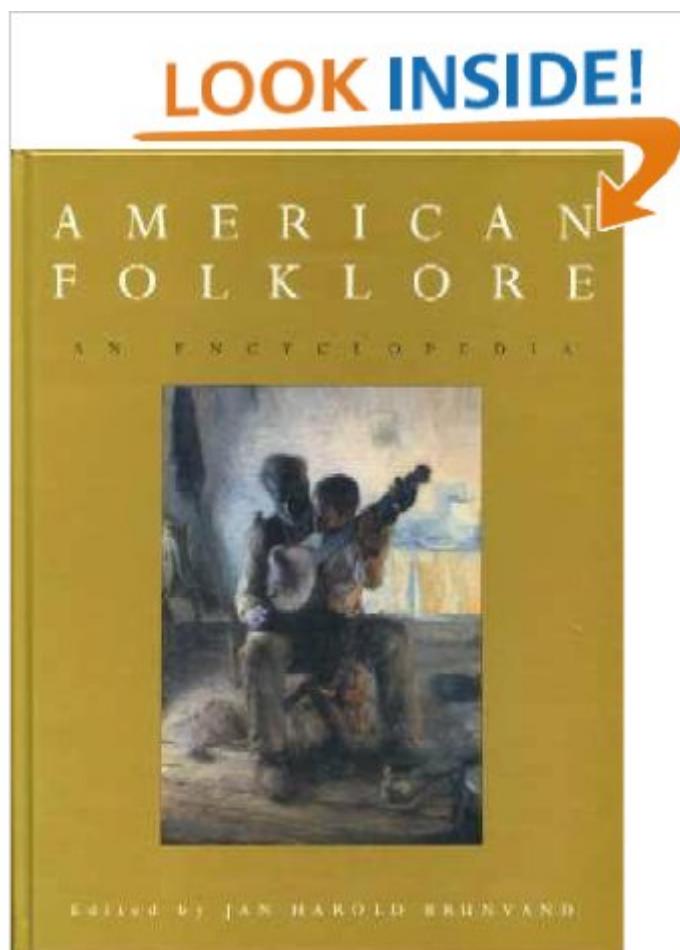


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American Folklore: An Encyclopedia (Garland Reference Library Of The Humanities)



Synopsis

Contains over 500 articles Ranging over foodways and folksongs, quiltmaking and computer lore, Pecos Bill, Butch Cassidy, and Elvis sightings, more than 500 articles spotlight folk literature, music, and crafts; sports and holidays; tall tales and legendary figures; genres and forms; scholarly approaches and theories; regions and ethnic groups; performers and collectors; writers and scholars; religious beliefs and practices. The alphabetically arranged entries vary from concise definitions to detailed surveys, each accompanied by a brief, up-to-date bibliography. Special features *More than 2000 contributors *Over 500 articles spotlight folk literature, music, crafts, and more *Alphabetically arranged *Entries accompanied by up-to-date bibliographies *Edited by America's best-known folklore authority

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Anyone who's ever been involved in the production of a specialized encyclopedia knows the possible pitfalls and realizes it's nearly impossible to avoid all of them. This volume suffers from relying on a few contributors who have not developed a strong grounding in the areas they cover. These are uncritically written and occasionally misleading. Certain other entries are inflated with trendy jargon that makes them unreadable and uninstructive. Other articles, however, by careful scholars of long experience, are of very high quality. They are accessible to college freshmen (or so one hopes) while providing a concise overview for the serious researcher. The book is abundantly illustrated with photos, though some of them--like the full-page pictures of Elvis, Davy Crockett, and

a fig-leaf wearing strongman--obviously have been selected primarily for their sales appeal. Others--like the full-page photo of an Anglo-American lady who sang a version of "Barbara Allen" and the full-page Currier & Ives of "The Angel of Prayer"--contribute very little. While it's impossible to include everything and everybody, there are some striking omissions here. "John Avery Lomax" gets his due, but there's no article on Alan (though he does appear several times in the index). "Jazz" and "Blues" are entered, but "ragtime" is hardly mentioned. On the opposite side of the ledger, "Con artist" is treated, though the topic's special connection with "folklore" is not very obvious. There's no general article on "folk hero," but the big, familiar topics, like "Tall tales," "Folksong," "Ballad," "Legend," "Cowboys," "Folklore and American Literature," and so on, are covered at length, and biographies of numerous folklorists and collectors are included.

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