Why is this? Most likely, the romanticism of a “fountain of youth” had more appeal than a geographical discovery which proved useful to later explorers on their future return trips to Europe.

The next chapter, “Magic in the Waters: The Fantasy of Florida Beckons Newcomers,” focuses on the various issues that arise when a state has the largest concentration of springs in the world. These are now estimated at more than seven hundred. The State of Florida as a land of eternal health was a theme that some of its earliest promoters used to boost tourism as health spas and springs were developed in the late nineteenth century, with alleged cures for everything from consumption and jaundice to rheumatism and syphilis.

Chapter Three, “Marketing the Myth: Inventing an American Eden,” highlights the manner in which the golden age of Florida tourism really started with World War Two. During this period, many of the grand hotels from the 1920s and 1930s boom were pressed into service as military barracks and hospitals. During the war, there was an increase in servicemen who were stationed in Florida or who just visited there while they were on leave. They descended upon Florida’s existing attractions and further taxed the hotel and restaurant industries. To accommodate this burgeoning tourist trade, enterprising developers built and marketed parks to attract these military guests. After that, many GIs returned to the state with their families, some on vacation, others as permanent residents. State tourism officials built on this development and began to aggressively promote the state as a tropical paradise where fantasies came to life, and many of the state’s most enduring tourist attractions revolved around the enduring myth of the fountain of youth.

The last chapter, “Swimming Holes to Sinkholes: Turning Crystal Waters into Liquid Gold,” deals with many of the environmental issues that a state with so many spas and springs must confront as many of them are public spaces, state and local parks, which are annually used for recreation by millions of residents and visitors. Yet the continued stress of overdevelopment puts the future of these watering holes at risk. Some, like Florida’s revered Silver Springs, are now on the endangered list. This springs’ flow and water quality are severely impaired, which is a common problem for watering holes throughout most of the state. In 1993, Silver Springs was sold to the State of Florida, and today a private company manages this theme park under a long-term lease.

The book is an easy read and pure kitsch, but it is one that will have much appeal in popular culture. There is a good bibliography, but the strength of the book is twofold. First, there is the extraordinary collection of images which demonstrate how the myth of the fountain of youth and its magical, restorative waters has been used to promote Florida’s tourism industry. This has helped to propel the state to the fourth most populous one in the United States, with over nineteen million people, according to a 2013 Census Bureau estimate. Second, the author addresses the very real environmental issues, particularly the importance of protecting Florida’s fragile springs and other natural wonders, such as the Everglades, one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world. These sites are on the verge of disappearing altogether as they face pressure from housing developments and businesses.

—Martin J. Manning
U.S. Department of State

Folklore Rules: A Fun, Quick, and Useful Introduction to the Field of American Folklore Studies

This slim volume, barely a hundred pages, provides a perfect introduction to the field of folklore studies. Designed primarily as a secondary text for special-topics college courses such as folklore and literature, history, or film, it explains folklore concepts in an accessible way that enables students to apply them in a variety of interdisciplinary courses. Author Lynne McNeill stresses throughout that “folklore sounds simple, but isn’t” (xiii). With some basic rules, however, one can know enough to undertake interesting folklore research projects and appreciate how “cool,” a word McNeill uses repeatedly, the study of folklore can be. McNeill divides the book into five straightforward chapters: (1) What Is Folklore? (2) What Do Folklorists Do? (3) Types of Folklore, (4) Types of Folk Groups, and (5) What Do I Do Now? This clear structure, combined with a conversational style that includes much first-person writing and many examples from student projects, provides a perfect starting point for understanding folklore.

McNeill begins her book with a useful definition by Ward Goodenough: “A society’s culture is whatever one has to know or believe in order to act in a
manner acceptable to its members” (3). Much of what one knows is not formally taught. For example, diners at McDonald’s know to go to the counter to order, not to sit down and wait to be served. McNeill makes her readers aware of the many folk groups they are a part of and then addresses the way in which folk information, or lore, is transmitted: typically by word of mouth. This leads to variations in content, or different versions, as well as to the anonymity of the original source. The key, McNeill tells her readers, is “in the way that form is transmitted within a population” (10). What the group values is preserved while other elements drop out; thus, a culture’s informal, traditional lore reveals “the heart and soul of that group” (15).

The book’s second chapter addresses folklore methodology. McNeill notes that just as criminologists do not commit crimes, nor do folklorists perform folklore; they study it. She references folklorist Alan Dundes’s important determinants when collecting folklore: the text, the context, and the texture. McNeill notes that folklore fieldwork encompasses many methods and is changing to incorporate digital formats such as e-mail, chat, Skype, or Facebook, in addition to traditional face-to-face collection. Using student examples of folklore projects, she emphasizes that folklore is not always easy to collect and that once one has content, the hard part begins: determining what it means and why it is important.

The remaining chapters ascribe to the book’s simplicity and user-friendly, breezy style. The chapter on types of folklore categorizes it in four ways: (1) things we say, (2) things we do, (3) things we make, and (4) things we believe. It offers copious examples of each. The chapter on folk groups is equally helpful, delving into occupational, religious, campus, children’s, and digital folk groups. These areas suggest the wide range of collection projects one could undertake. The final brief chapter urges students to take notice of the folklore around them and interpret it. Likening the folklorist to a superhero with x-ray vision, McNeill writes, “you’re seeing, reacting to, and participating in all the same things as the people around you, but you’re going a bit deeper, too, recognizing that there’s a whole world of shared understandings being symbolically communicated around us at all times” (90).

Folklore Rules is a delightful book that accomplishes what it sets out to do. It makes the field of folklore understandable without diminishing its complexities, and it shows how exciting and culturally insightful folklore study can be.

—Kathy Merlock Jackson
Virginia Wesleyan College

**Free Radical: Ernest Chambers, Black Power, and the Politics of Race**

In *Free Radical: Ernest Chambers, Black Power, and the Politics of Race*, author Tekla Ali Johnson examines the critical role of Ernest Chambers’s work in the city of Omaha, the state of Nebraska, and within the US. Johnson uses careful detail to illustrate Chambers’s deep commitment to his constituents, portraying his work as a human rights advocate, state senator for nearly forty years, and Black Nationalist ideologue as all intertwined for human liberation. The strength of the book lies in Johnson’s ability to provide the reader with a broad view of Chambers’s political acumen by establishing a context that overlaps his early life and collegiate experiences, where his political antennae were raised and developed, to the sociopolitical living conditions of Blacks in Omaha and throughout the United States. Chambers served as the only African American state senator in the Nebraskan Unicameral throughout his career. Johnson’s presentation provides critical insights into how local and national civil rights and Black freedom struggles, connected with the African liberation movement, galvanized Chambers’s own political identity. According to Johnson, Chambers’s overall philosophy centered on “a belief in humanism” where all people were treated humanely, and he openly expressed his discontent for the injustices all around him (36).

Johnson divides the book into seven chapters where two main themes emerge: Chambers as “Defender of the Downtrodden” and Chambers as “Free Radical.” These themes, borrowed from a chapter title and title of the work, are mutually inclusive for Chambers’s work. In the first four chapters, the author provides a framework for better understanding the political challenges that Blacks faced in Omaha by detailing Chambers’s “education as a radical” (Chapter One), his connections to the community (Chapters Two and Three), and his learning resulting from his early experiences in the legislature (Chapter Four). Each of these