

2023 WAYLAND D. HAND PRIZE RECIPIENTS

The History and Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society annually awards the Wayland D. Hand Prize for an outstanding book that combines historical and folkloristic perspectives. The prize honors Wayland D. Hand (1907–1986) who served as president of the American Folklore Society (AFS) and in his teaching and scholarship encouraged the integration of historical and folkloristic research. For a list of past winners, visit <https://americanfolkloresociety.org/our-work/prizes/wayland-d-hand-prize/>.

The finalists for this year's Wayland D. Hand Prize were:

Sarah Covington, 2022, *The Devil from Over the Sea: Remembering & Forgetting Oliver Cromwell in Ireland*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Kristina R. Gaddy, 2022, *Well of Souls: Uncovering the Banjo's Hidden History*. New York: W. W. Norton.

John M. Shaw, 2022, *Following the Drums: African American Fife & Drum Music in Tennessee*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.

Steve Siporin, 2022, *The Befana Is Returning: The Story of a Tuscan Festival*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

From which, the Selection Committee chose:

Steve Siporin's *The Befana Is Returning: The Story of a Tuscan Festival*, published by the University of Wisconsin Press (2022).

The Committee felt that Dr. Siporin's description of the centuries-old mumming tradition of the Befanata centered in the small rural town of Pitigliano (population approximately 4,000) in Southern Tuscany, Italy, was a significant advance in addressing the relationship between history, tradition, and performance in contemporary folk

studies. Through an historical ethnography of the Befanat—a kindly old woman or grandmotherly witch who delivers toys, candies, and giftst—Dr. Siporin offers keen insights into her character and role in promoting community, into the deep symbolism of foods given to the revelers, and into the characteristics of the songs and narratives associated with the festive custom. Siporin’s crisp writing captures the immediate experiences of performers and audiences in action, allowing the reader to experience the festive moment as a system of living relationships in which folk performance, tradition, and local history intersect to represent tradition as it passes from quaint survival to a past preserved in amber to an ongoing part of Pitigliano’s everyday life.