

Powwowing among the Pennsylvania Dutch: A Traditional Medical Practice in the Modern World. By DAVID W. KRIEBEL. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008. xi, 295 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. \$30.)

David W. Kriebel's *Powwowing among the Pennsylvania Dutch: A Traditional Medical Practice in the Modern World* traces the history of powwowing and seeks to explain why it continues to be practiced in the twenty-first century. Due to his decision to write a qualitative study of powwowing, Kriebel has crafted a well-written and wonderfully enjoyable book. Part of the volume's appeal stems from Kriebel's integration of case studies and appendices that allow powwowers and their clients to speak for themselves.

Kriebel is an excellent storyteller. He enthusiastically takes his reader along on his journey to understand powwowing, its practitioners, and its persistence. Powwowing, a traditional medical practice of the Pennsylvania Germans, remains an important health-care choice for the Pennsylvania Dutch and their neighbors. After reading about Kriebel's hair-raising meeting with a powwower, the reader will be hooked and will look forward to turning the pages of the book in anticipation of Kriebel's next account.

Kriebel introduces the reader to powwowers who still practice; he also presents a wide assortment of primary sources from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He includes healing recipes, cases of demonic possession, and his own interviews with modern-day practitioners. Scholars interested in theoretical and philosophical interpretations of the traditional medical practice will not be disappointed. Furthermore, chapter 7 and appendix 1 consider powwowing in terms of anthropological theory and ideas about identity formation.

Readers wanting to learn more about powwowing's ties to herbalism will have to look elsewhere. Kriebel's decision not to emphasize herbalism stemmed from his choice to focus on the supernatural qualities, or what he terms "magical" or "spiritual" practices and beliefs, associated with powwowing (16). Although herbalism is classified as a natural healing practice, rituals and ideas associated with it often have a supernatural foundation. Thus, Kriebel's explanation as to why he decided not to investigate the herbal tradition within powwowing appears unjustified.

Due to its nice balance of narrative and theory, this volume will appeal to a broad audience. Powwowers and their clients will appreciate Kriebel's sensitive account of this significant healing practice. Scholars interested in traditional healing will be inspired and impressed by his thorough investigation of powwowing. Historians of Pennsylvania culture and folklore will find the book an excellent addition to their libraries and their classrooms.