

Explorations in Sights and Sounds, No. 13 (1993)

Counter also tells the stories of Henson and Perry and how they met, and how Henson got to be on Perry's team. In many history books, Henson is described as a servant or valet, but Counter explains that a valet was the highest rank a black man could have in the United States Navy at that time. He describes Henson's skills—he was the only member of the team who could speak the Eskimo's language, and it was he who could build and repair the sleds. He was also so expert in handling dog teams that even the Eskimos were impressed. Counter also gives us a glimpse into Eskimo culture and their stories surrounding the lives of Henson and Perry. The tale ends with Counter's successful attempt to rebury Henson's remains from New York's Woodlawn Cemetery to Arlington, near Perry's grave. Though Anaukag Henson recently died, fundraising allowed five Amer-Eskimo Hensons to attend the ceremony.

This is an exciting and moving account of the history of contact between two Americans—one black and one white—and a Polar Eskimo community. Anyone from high school and beyond will find it accessible, though it is a scholarly work.

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Malka Drucker. *Grandma's Latkes.* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992) 29 pp., \$13.95 cloth.

Grandma's Latkes, written by Malka Drucker (who wrote the acclaimed Jewish Holiday Series published by Holiday House) and illustrated by Eve Chwast, accomplishes three things simultaneously: it is an instructional story on the preparation of latkes, it retells the story of the origin of Hanukkah, and it is an endearing story of the passing down of a tradition from one generation to another. The book works successfully on all three levels, and children from the ages of six to ten will be able to understand and appreciate its rich multiplicity.

At its basic, most plot-driven level, *Grandma's Latkes* tells the story of Molly helping her grandmother with the preparation of the traditional latkes. The narration is meticulous in its detail, from the fact that the recipe calls for "one onion with three potatoes," to the admonition to Molly from Grandma that she not get her face too close to the sputtering grease. The story of Antiochus and Mattathias is interrupted when Grandma teaches Molly how to get pieces of eggshell out of eggs with another piece of eggshell. All in all, the action in the kitchen gives children a real feeling of a "hands-on"

approach to learning. The final page of the book even includes a recipe for "Grandma's Latkes," which is a welcome addition to a book that would ignite the curiosity of many would-be chefs.

When Molly questions why they eat latkes during Hanukkah, Grandma responds that it reminds them of the oil. She then tells the story of how the wise man Mattathias, who lived near Jerusalem, defied the Syrian king Antiochus by refusing to eat meat from a pig. His oldest son, Judah Maccabee, and his four brothers led a small army against Antiochus and his thousands of soldiers, with a resulting miraculous win. The second miracle occurred when a small drop of oil was sufficient for the Menorah to burn for eight days. Molly later concludes, when the rest of the family is gathered, that "'Hanukkah is about miracles.'" With the correlating story of the food preparation, the religious teaching here is given with a keen understanding of how children learn by doing, by questioning, and by reaching their own conclusions.

Overriding these two levels of narration is the sense of family continuity that the carrying on of tradition helps so much to establish. At the beginning, Grandma points out to Molly that the recipe they are using is in Molly's great-grandmother's handwriting (even though they will expand it, suggesting that change is sometimes necessary in the keeping of tradition). Molly and Grandma share a close camaraderie in this particular preparation, and at the end, Grandma, giving Molly a kiss, tells her that she now knows enough to teach her own grandchildren.

As in any family and/or religious tradition, knowing the stories is basic to that tradition's continuity. The storytelling in *Grandma's Latkes*, on all three levels, succeeds in understandably making connections that children might not otherwise recognize. It is ultimately a story in faith, faith in a job well-done, faith in religion, faith in family, and faith in tradition.

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Lois Ehlert. *Moon Rope (Un lazo a la luna)*. Translated into Spanish by Amy Prince. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992) 30 pp., \$14.95 cloth.

In this children's explanatory tale, Fox persuades Mole to go to the moon on a braided grass rope. After Mole slips from the rope and is carried to earth on the back of a bird, he digs a tunnel, which explains why Mole chooses a nocturnal existence. The simplicity of