

## **Polish-American Folklore (Folklore and Society)**

Deborah Silverman



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Integrating vivid photographs, firsthand observations, and interviews against a rich backdrop of ethnic practices and traditions, Deborah Anders Silverman explores how Polish Americans are creatively adapting the rural peasant folklore of the old country to life in multicultural, urban America. Silverman surveys rituals of courtship, marriage, coming of age, and funerals, also noting those customs that have been rediscovered after falling into disuse. She follows the trail of folk stories and delves into folk music and dance, particularly the polka, providing a detailed discussion of texts, contexts, and performance practices. She also describes birthing practices, home remedies, superstitions, folk blessings, and miracle cures. In addition, she offers a wealth of information on foodways and on the origins and celebration of holy days, from Christmas Eve vigils to the Dyngus Day festivals of the Easter season. Polish-American Folklore reveals a community that preserves distinctive traditions even though geographically dispersed in a new homeland. Polish Americans retain ties to their ethnicity though ethnic media, social clubs, churches, group events, and the Internet. family-oriented culture that attracts not only Polish immigrants and their descendants but also newcomers from other ethnic and racial groups. By including first-person commentary from a wide range of Polish American individuals and families, from first-generation immigrants to non-Polish in-laws who embrace Polish foods, music, and traditions, Silverman brings to life a thriving ethnic subculture that values equally its Polish roots and its American harvest.

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