

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

in the different scenarios where the story develops. This appropriate use of the language adds more realism to the story when this version of street-smart language is used.

There is no question that Colon-Santiago makes a unique contribution to the ever-growing body of Puerto Rican literature written by natives of the island or by immediate descendants of Puerto Ricans living in the diaspora.

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S. Allen Counter. *North Pole Legacy: Black, White and Eskimo.* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991) 222 pages, \$14.95 paper.

According to the *Guinness Book of Records*, Eskimos Egingwah, Ootah, Ooqueahand Seegloo, along with African American Matthew Henson, became the first humans to stand on the North Pole. The date of their famous journey to “where no one has gone before” was April 6, 1909. However, they were denied the status of “co-discoverer” with Robert E. Perry, who came along about forty-five minutes later. Perry’s reward to Henson for reaching the Pole before him was to ignore Henson from that time. The names of the Eskimos were also dropped from history.

Professor Allen S. Counter is a Harvard professor of neuroscience and director of the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations. He received permission from Denmark in 1986 to travel to Greenland to conduct audiological studies on Eskimos. While there he located the octogenarian Amer-Eskimo sons of Henson and Perry, plus great-grandchildren. While in the Arctic Henson had a son named Anaukag, while Perry had two sons—Kali and his deceased older brother, also named Anaukag. Counter learned that both men wanted to go to America and meet their American relatives before they died. At this point the book documents the amazing stories of history, culture, determination, near-misses, love, embarrassment, denial, family relations and other themes to bring “The North Pole Family Reunion” to Harvard.

The two men were treated entirely differently by their families. When word reached the Henson family, everyone vied to be the host for their Eskimo relatives. In contrast, the Perrys greeted the news through an official spokesman with stony silence and not one Perry family member attended the ceremony held at Admiral Perry’s grave at Arlington National Cemetery (though Robert E. Perry, Jr., did greet his half-brother at the Perry home in Augusta, Maine.)

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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.

George Junne
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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"