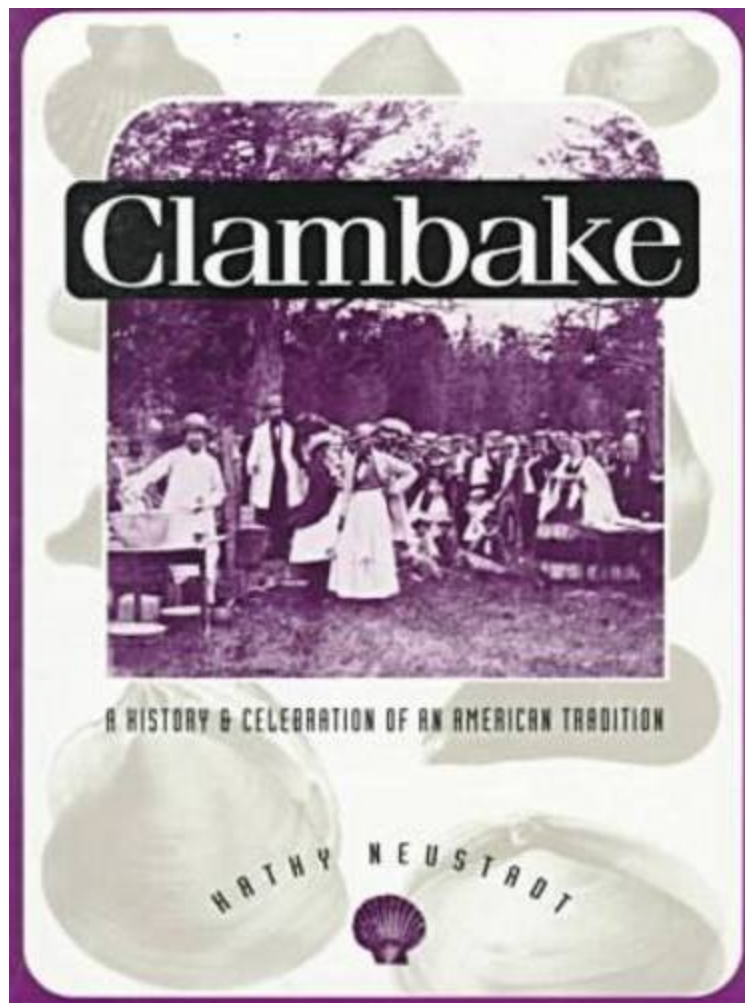


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Clambake: A History and Celebration of an American Tradition (Publications of the American Folklore Society, New Series)

Katherine D. Neustadt

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Katherine D. Neustadt : Clambake: A History and Celebration of an American Tradition (Publications of the American Folklore Society, New Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Clambake: A History and Celebration of an American Tradition (Publications of the American Folklore Society, New Series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. New England Folklore at its bestBy PNRAn intriguing and well written overview of Clambaking in New England, specifically Allen's Neck, Massachusetts. For further reading in Folklore studies, read Dynamics of Folklore6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Of Clams, Cooking, and AmbivalenceBy Bob NewmanAs a New Englander born and bred, for me there's nothing better than a plate of finely

fried clams with a bottle of beer and some tartar sauce or perhaps, a dish of fragrant steamers to be dipped in clam juice and butter. So I had this gut feeling (sorry) that I was going to enjoy Neustadt's CLAMBAKE. I wasn't wrong either. Here, in a most user-friendly format, you can find everything you ever wanted to know about clambakes---the history of clambakes in New England; 19th century customs such as Squantum feasts, political banquets, and Forefather's Day; the rise of tourism and public transportation; the manner of collecting and cooking all ingredients, and how a particular clambake, celebrated every year in a small community in southeastern Massachusetts, related to its participants and performers. Neustadt collected all manner of posters, old photos, and magazine illustrations from the past which are scattered appealingly throughout the text in conjunction with her own photographs. All this is most pleasing and I don't hesitate to recommend the book to anyone interested in the subject. The second side of the book is one in which the author attempts to link her study of clambakes to the larger field of anthropological theory. As regards this aspect of the book, I think I might have titled my review "To Deconstruct or Not To Deconstruct", for I feel that Neustadt remained extremely ambivalent about her own profession or at least, her participation in its peculiar rituals and behavioral system. She aptly points out that what people refer to as the "tradition" of clambaking is, in fact, invented tradition which draws attention to what was considered a "suitable" past. She nicely concludes that the clambake underlines the imagery of inheritance (from the Indians, from the Pilgrim fathers) rather than the inheritance itself, it being unproven that the Indians ever had any clambaking tradition. So far, so good. But, if I were you, I would skip Chapter 7, in which she tries gamely to relate her research to the work of all sorts of "heavies", but backs off each time, saying that, to her, it really doesn't fit. She is so ambivalent about getting theoretical that one wonders why she even wrote this chapter. (Could it be that it was part of a prior thesis ? Part of her own initiation rites?) Then, surprisingly, in the final chapter, she sums up in excellent form what she thinks it all means, connects clambakes to identity, community, continuity, harmony. Why she needed that previous chapter is even more questionable. She plumps for experience over analysis---which is great as advice for life---but doesn't cut much ice in the arena of intellectual activity. She remains dithering between readers of popular folklore and an academic audience, uncertain of whom she is writing for. It's a strange performance in an otherwise fine book, because you know, she wrote for both. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Juicy ReadingBy grasshopper4Neustadt's book is enjoyable reading. She writes with clarity and wit, and I especially enjoyed the way that she integrates the study of social history with an analysis of a contemporary foodways tradition. It is especially rewarding to follow her interest in seeing how a seemingly simple event can be studied to discover significant meanings. Her analysis can be applied to other types of community events that center around food preparation and consumption, and she provides useful ideas for discovering ways to document similar folklife events. Although the intrusion of arcane academic arguments might put off the typical reader, the use of jargon is generally accessible, and the hip reader will enjoy Neustadt's clever subversion of the overemphasis on theorizing. The hip reader will then wish to go out and eat some steamed clams. (Pass the butter.)

An appreciative examination of the New England clambake, Neustadt divides her study into three parts: historical (social, economic, political, regional, and cultural) influences on the clambake; a close focus on the Allen's Neck clambake as a cultural phenomena in its own right; and a critical examination of the central elements of the clambaking tradition--food, ritual, and festival. The author views the clambake as a unique American folk tradition with interesting connections and rich resonances with other aspects of American culture and history.

From Publishers WeeklyCombining history, ethnography, reportage and essay, an independent folklore scholar offers a wealth of perspectives on the not-so-humble clambake. Prompted by a visit to the Allen's Neck Clambake, a southeastern Massachusetts institution for more than 100 years, Neustadt traces the clambake's roots to both Native American practice and invented Yankee tradition. Her earnest, effusive description of the Allen's Neck feast covers the town's heritage (Quaker, Portuguese, summer visitors) and details the anatomy and aesthetic of the clambake--from ticket sales to constructing a fire to picking clams. Neustadt is no Calvin Trillin, but for two-thirds of the book she eschews academic jargon in favor of clear prose. In a final, more academic section, she argues that none of the common analytical categories--clambake as food, festival or ritual feast--sufficiently explains the event. With its old-fashioned foods and community spirit, the clambake, she writes, affirms identity in a time when society is fragmenting. Illustrations. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library JournalThe annual clambake, celebrated for over 100 years by the community of Allen's Neck in southeastern Massachusetts, is the focus of this ethnographic study. Neustadt, who has a doctorate in folklore and folk life, examines the history of the New England clambake from its Native American origin to its reinvention as a postindustrial pastime. She carefully records every aspect of properly preparing the seaside feast at Allen's Neck. She also explores the clambake's symbolic significance, revealing its importance as an expression of community identity. Recommended for academic and regional history collections.- Eloise R. Hitchcock, Tennessee Technological Univ. Lib., CookevilleCopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Both a loving celebration of an annual community event, the century-old Allen's Neck clambake [in Massachusetts], and an insightful examination of how public rituals like it help people define who they are."New York Times" Makes a much needed contribution to American Studies by illustrating how much the discipline would profit

from taking foods and foodways more seriously. . . . Neustadt brings a humanist's appreciation of historical narrative and of archival graphics (photographs, paintings, prints, ads) to her study . . . and a social scientist's alertness to function and structure. . . . She has the eye of a Eudora Welty."American Studies"Neustadt offers a vivid history of an American regional culture. (Cited as a 'Breakthrough Book.')"Lingua Franca"A book as rich in themes as a clambake is rich in flavors."New England Quarterly