

Highland Heritage, Scottish Americans in the American South

Although the author intended to research the archaeology of Iron Age Europe, she entered the University of Edinburgh and became very interested in the Scottish national identity (preface). When she arrived back in the States, the author, Celeste Ray, began to focus on the Scottish Heritage revival which became the theme of her book. Some main points are:

- 1. Highland Scottish culture, its heritage revival.**
- 2. How ethnicity and heritage survive through “innovation and flexibility rather than rigid tradition.”**
- 3. The fallacies of the Multicultural revival of the 1990’s.**
- 4. The nature of heritage and how people reclaim it over generations. Main focus on Scottish-Americans in North Carolina.**

The intention of the author is to study cultural relativism, presentism, the intrusion of our present frame onto our interpretation and use of history, the importance that continuity assumes, and *communitas*, the feeling of community togetherness, which is also an important function of heritage. She uses her works with the Scottish heritage revival, especially those in North Carolina, to examine heritage revivals in general (Summary, Lida Mc Daniel).

Heritage communicates our sense of self, as groups and as individuals, and is what shapes our ethnic identity. “Claiming dress or food customs as an inheritance provides the feeling of uniqueness, but no aloneness.” (p.10) (Summary, Caryn Falcone).

There is much brainstorming throughout the Introduction, such as, what are the modes heritage survives through, what ethnic identity is now, what was it then, what is the lost sentiment of this lost culture, and how does memory form the culture. Many facets will be answered as we gain knowledge through the progress of the following chapters, for example, chapter one will explain the origins of contemporary ethnic expression, chapter two will explain the Scottish Heritage and its revival in North Carolina, chapter three will expand on the Kith and Clan communities, chapter four will inform us on the games and gatherings, chapter five is the understanding of pilgrimage and the sense for Scottish places, chapter six expands on the “Warrior Scots,” and the final chapter will enlighten us to the Scottish heritage, southern style. The author will guide us through the qualitative method of research by her many years of field experience, interviews, historical archives, and modern day sentiment. The structure of the book is detailed in the Introduction, in which the author stresses her focus on “community formation through new rituals.”

Ray’s book is a wonderful insight into the behavior of modern Americans as they search for a highland heritage and a community, particularly, one in tune with a parallel heritage of being southern.