

BOOK REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS

After a year of writing letters to publishers, badgering friends to finish book reviews, and pounding out last minute abstracts myself, I am finally starting to learn my craft. The *Journal of Ethnobiology* is now on the review list of most major publishers of ethnobiological works. If any of our readers are interested in becoming reviewers, please send me your name, address, and preferred subject area. We will also welcome unsolicited reviews if you discover a book that you want to share with our readership. Significant works that have been in press for awhile but may have been missed the first time around, should also be considered.

—Charles H. Miksicek
Book Review Editor

Book Review

Fading Feast: A Compendium of Disappearing American Regional Foods. Raymond Sokolov. New York: E. P. Dutton, Inc., 1983. 276 pp., illus., \$6.95, paperback.

Fading Feast is a delightful collection of twenty-four essays collected by gastro-ethnographer Raymond Sokolov, on a two year expedition sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History through the backwaters and byways of the American heartland. This Indiana Jones of the culinary set, sought out endangered dishes from Tillamook Cheddar to Terlingua Chile, Kosher Challah to Cajun *Boudin Blanc*; foods with regional flavor and ethnic identity. In our homogenized and mass-marketed culture, most of these traditional dishes are only reserved for family gatherings and seasonal feasts. Others are only found in gourmet and specialty shops.

Many of these regional specialties are losing out to their more commercially marketable cousins. The small Key Lime, also known as the Mexican Lime, has been replaced by the Tahitian Lime, actually a green lemon-hybrid with questionable parentage. Maine lowbush blueberries are far more difficult to harvest, process, and ship than the larger, hybrid highbush variety. The imported Japanese persimmon compares about as favorably to the native Hoosier species, as the bounceable tomato found in our local market stacks up to a Midwestern "Beefsteak" picked fresh from the vine. Olympia oysters mature more slowly and never get as large as the Pacific oyster borrowed from Japanese mariculture. The stronger-flavored, native black walnut has a much thicker shell than the commercial species imported from Persia. Virginia hams take much longer to smoke and age properly than the brine-cured, water-injected product available from our local packing houses. Other delicacies are just plain rare, such as the Michigan morel, La Jolla abalone, or Minnesota wild rice. Still others, like white lightning are downright illegal.

Perhaps the most sobering tales in *Fading Feast* deal with traditional delicacies that have been strangled by government regulations or competing business interests. The native salmon harvest in the Pacific Northwest has been severely impacted by commercial and sport fishing, the timber industry, and damming the wild streams. Western lamb, which has always been tainted by the cowboy-shepherd rivalry, is now being affected by government permit regulations that favor recreational vehicles over ranchers. Interstate shipment of gooseberries is strictly regulated because they are an alternate host for the white-pine blister rust. Department of Agriculture regulations on meats are so stringent that geese, with tenacious pin-features, have been replaced by turkeys as the Christmas bird, chicken has replaced squirrel in Brunswick stew, and you will never find a blackbird in Kentucky *Burgeo*.

You are what you eat is more than just a trite phrase. The food we eat is a reflection of our cultural heritage. Delicate, wafer-thin *piki* bread, made from blue corn grown with the proper ceremony, ground on a stone metate, and cooked on a red-hot *piki* stone is an elegant expression of everything that epitomizes traditional Hopi society. Black-eyed peas and rice express the ties of South Carolina *Gullah* culture to its African roots.

I have always felt that the more senses that are used in a learning experience, the stronger a lesson is learned. Each essay in *Fading Feast* is followed by a collection of traditional recipes that will tantalize the nose and palate.

A review of a "cookbook" may seem a little out of place in a "serious" scientific journal, and yet a regional feast has been an important part of most of the recent Ethnobiology Conferences. In San Diego we tasted an astounding variety of Japanese delicacies, in Oklahoma we feasted on buffalo, and in Tucson we sampled traditional Papago and Southwestern fare. After a Northwest Coast banquet that included baked salmon, smoked ooligan, and salmonberry sprouts, many of the participants at the Seattle conference wondered what next year's gathering in Boston would have to offer. It would seem only logical to open to the chapter of *Fading Feast* that describes a traditional New England clambake and start hunting for a cord of hardwood, a truckload of rockweed, bushels of clams, and dozens of eager volunteers. It would also seem appropriate to invite Raymond Sokolov as the after dinner speaker.

CHM

Book Review

Hoko River: A 2500 Year Old Fishing Camp on the Northwest Coast of North America.

Edited by Dale R. Croes and Eric Blinman. Pullman: Washington State University, Laboratory of Anthropology, Reports of Investigations, No. 58, 1980. xx+ 333 pp., illus., \$9.50, paperback.

The Hoko River Site was a coastal fishing camp on the northern edge of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State that was occupied about 2500 years ago. Like the well-known Ozette Village, Hoko River is a waterlogged site with excellent organic preservation due to the constantly wet, anaerobic environment. Faunal remains identified from the site include a vast array of mollusks, fish, birds, land mammals, and sea mammals. Botanical artifacts include basketry, cordage, wooden fishhooks, conical hats, wooden wedges, and wooden handles for hafting microliths. Pollen and non-artifactual plant macrofossils are also discussed. Information derived from the experimental replication and utilization of various artifact types is also presented.

Hoko River includes a fascinating section on Ethnohistory by Jenel Virden and Maureen Brinck-Lund which provides very useful historic and ethnographic background. Detailed analyses are provided for each artifact class. The methodology sections provide interesting insights into the problems and potentials of wet-site archaeology. Because much of the detailed data from Ozette Village is not as yet widely available, the comparative data included in *Hoko River* will prove invaluable to other wet-site archaeologists and paleoecologists.

Hoko River will make those paleoethnobiologists that are used to working with data from open sites with much poorer preservation, green with envy.

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