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 sprotz, 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.

Book Review


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 Jenet 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.