

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

The Archaeology and History of the Native Georgia Tribes. By Max E. White.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7rr878kj>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 27(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Ethridge, Robbie

Publication Date

2003-06-01

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

These acts created twelve regional for-profit corporations. Each encompassed a geographically contiguous area comprising several villages. Of the 208 villages distributed among the regions, each was incorporated as a non-profit. Some of the land owned by the regional corporations was conveyed to the village corporations and then to individuals.

ANCSA permitted multinational corporations to build docks in Valdez on Prince William Sound, a pip line to move oil from the North Slope, and to drill for and pump oil from beneath the shallow waters of Prudhoe Bay, thus creating Alaska's most recent boom.

After finishing the book, I'm impressed by its exhaustive scope, yet also by how little space natives receive. This is not to say that Haycox totally disregards natives: He discusses Tlingit responses to non-natives who established operations near their communities, mentions the manner in which natives were employed on the fringes of boom developments, and reviews the significant contributions of natives to framing ANCSA. But this is not an ethnohistory that uses journals, newspaper articles, diaries, notes, and accounts of traders, trappers, salesmen, housewives, and so forth to convey a picture of how natives accommodated to non-natives and how and in what ways natives coped with expropriations, exploitation, and domination.

Haycox uses the anthropological term *acculturation* to account for U.S. policies toward native Alaskans, principally to describe the replacement of native customs (acts, sentiments, objects, ideas, and so forth) by western customs. Acculturation is a hoary term in social science, polyvalent and laden with controversy. It doesn't work well as a shorthand explanation; indeed, it fails to explain anything.

Also, Haycox's use of the term *colonial* to describe Alaska is easy to confuse with the colonies and colonial administrations that characterized German, French, British, Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish colonies throughout Africa, Asia, and parts of the Western Hemisphere, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet it is consonant with the way in which several historians have reinterpreted western American history in the past three decades.

These minor criticisms do not detract from Haycox's history. I know of no other competitors. He has provided a grand sweep of Alaska's past, together with an excellent understanding of how Alaska came to be as it is today.

Joseph G. Jorgensen
University of California, Irvine

The Archaeology and History of the Native Georgia Tribes. By Max E. White. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002. 176 pages. \$55.00 cloth.

Archaeology has long held a fascination for the public. It is the most popular field in anthropology, and there are many organizations devoted to the inclusion of the public in archaeological endeavors and education. Although covering only the state of Georgia, Max White's *The Archaeology and History of*

the Native Georgia Tribes brings archaeology and Indian history to the general public. White's book synthesizes current archaeological and historical data and conclusions in a well written, highly readable, and informed text that is accessible to lay and scholarly audiences alike. He digests a vast array of archaeological data covering thousands of years into only 176 pages, without losing the substance and body of knowledge that the data represents. And more importantly, he translates archaeological jargon into terms that the non-professional can understand. White deftly yet patiently explains concepts and terms that usually perplex those of us not steeped in the field, such as "ceramic phases," "focuses," "diagnostic artifacts," "site types," and so on. Having equipped the reader with the terminology, White then delves into the what seemingly arcane archaeological data means and what it can tell us about the people who once lived in Georgia.

The book opens with the natural setting of Georgia, and moves the reader through the Paleo, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian periods. White tells the tale of European contact and the colonial experience and what this meant for Georgia's native peoples. He then provides cultural descriptions of how the Creeks, Cherokees, and other tribes lived during the historic period, and concludes with their forced removal and where they are today. Each chapter is generously illustrated with photographs of archaeological finds and sites, maps of the major sites for each era, and historical artwork depicting Georgia Indians. Although scholars might be disappointed by the lack of in-text citations, White's bibliography and suggested reading lists at the end of each chapter show that he knows his archaeology and his history. I imagine the omission of in-text citations was based on the the book's intended audience—the interested layperson—for whom in-text citations would have interrupted the flow of the narrative.

Each chapter opens with a fictional vignette in which an Indian man or woman engages in an activity that would have been part of daily life for the era under discussion. This is an excellent device for bringing the reader into the life of the times; it also reminds us that archaeology is always an endeavor in reconstructing past ways of life. After each opening, White uses an interesting mix of archaeological and historical data, discussions of specific sites and excavations, and quotes from Georgia archaeologists and early ethnographers to reconstruct ways of life, while adding tidbits about some of the personalities who have shaped Georgia archaeology. This technique makes archaeology central to the story of the native people of Georgia and demonstrates just how much archaeology contributes to our knowledge about them. However, the book is not about Georgia archaeology, but about the native Georgia tribes. As the author stresses, the two stories are interlinked. So, although he does not frame it as such, White's book offers a compelling argument for the relevancy of archaeology that should strengthen public support for archaeological work. More importantly, because it is so accessible, the book can go far in bringing native Georgians into the historical consciousness of the public. In a highly readable way, White combines many strands of data and scholarship to chronicle the changes and history of Georgia's indigenous inhabitants, expanding the history of the region by some 12,000 years. Although the book will be of

most interest to Georgians, anyone interested in Southeastern Indians or Southeastern archaeology will find it a helpful addition to their libraries. High school teachers will find it useful as a guide to incorporating native histories into their curriculum, and teachers of undergraduate courses in archaeology or Southeastern Indians will find it an enjoyable and sound addition to their required reading lists. Native American historians will find White's book an invaluable synthesis of the archaeological record, which they can use in their own efforts to interpret archaeological data. I also imagine that many a young Georgian will be intrigued enough to want to become an archaeologist who will go on to fill out a later chapter to the book.

This work does not provide cutting-edge historical, anthropological, and archaeological analysis—nor is it intended to. Instead, it offers a solid and comprehensive synthesis of archaeological and historical data about Georgia Indians, written for the general public. As we know, the conclusions of scholarship often have some difficulty finding their way to the public. Books such as White's can serve as a model for doing so. I hope that every state will find their own Max E. White to do a similar job in describing their archaeology and the story of the native people who lived, and continue to live, within their borders.

Robbie Ethridge

University of Mississippi

Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy. By Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1999. 462 pages. \$16.95 paper.

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's trilogy, *Aurelia*, beautifully tells the story and life of the Crow Creek Sioux tribe through the life experiences of a Sioux woman. The novel interweaves Aurelia's own story and hopes with that of her tribe's and those around her. The reader witnesses along with Aurelia the difficulty of being an Indian person in America and the resilience of the Dakota people.

Aurelia is a trilogy, merging the stories of a people with the common thread that is the character of Aurelia. The trilogy is a compilation of the novels, *From the River's Edge* which was published in 1990, and parts of *Circle of Dancers* and *In the Presence of River Gods*, which appeared in *The New Native American Novel and Indian Artist*.

Cook-Lynn, well known as a writer of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, is also a critic. The same clean, concise writing style that makes her a skilled essayist and critic is evident throughout the book. And her poetic background shows through the description of the landscape in which her novel takes place. Like many Indian writers such as N. Scott Momaday and Louise Erdrich, the description and connection to the land is a large part of the text.

Cook-Lynn begins the story with John Tatekeya, an elderly man from her community whose cattle are stolen by a white neighbor. The first novella deals with the trial he undergoes and the outright lack of justice and unfair policy affecting American Indians.