

**UCLA**

**American Indian Culture and Research Journal**

**Title**

The loway Indians. By Martha Royce Blaine.

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4gk6w0j5>

**Journal**

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 6(3)

**ISSN**

0161-6463

**Author**

Bahr, Donald

**Publication Date**

1982-06-01

**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/>

cally and economically and eliminated any possibility for mutual cooperation or profit.

Fisher accurately points out that the effects of settlement varied according to the different tribes, because some Indians accepted change more readily than others. The Indians at Metlakatla acknowledged a radical shift in their lifestyle with minimal resistance. However, the change that was affecting them was not a direct result of settlement but came from the missionaries who, unlike the previous groups, had the greatest impact in altering the Indian's lifestyle--because they called for a total transformation of Indian culture.

Fisher's book tells of a particular transformation: that of the Indian-White relationship which metamorphosed from one of partnership, whereby Indians molded the trade to meet their own purposes, to one of adversary in which the Indians and Whites shared no common bonds. The book has some shortcomings by excluding oral and pre-contact tradition and is partial in its conclusions; it is based on a wide variety of written documents and literature and is a tightly written, well organized work composed with insight.

*Ramona E. Soza*  
*University of Washington*

**The Ioway Indians.** By Martha Royce Blaine. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979. 364 pp. \$24.95 cloth

This review has two parts, one personal but illuminated by the book and possibly illuminating of it, the other objective and pertaining to the nature of the ethnohistoric as opposed to ethnographic data that went into the book. Personally first, I lived in Iowa from ages five through 18, went to public schools there, never learned who the Ioway were, attended college out of state, eventually became an anthropology professor specialized in Southwest tribes, and still didn't know who the Ioway were until reading Blaine's book for this review. My prolonged non-encounter with the tribe is explained in the first place by their not having made war on the U.S. The regional Indian history we learned in Iowa was limited to wars, primarily the Blackhawk War of 1830 and the Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857. The Ioway

were directly involved in neither, so neither my schoolmates nor I learned about the People who gave our state its name.

Blaine's book explains that the Ioway occupied roughly the southern two thirds of today's Iowa when furs, mostly in French hands, were the region's main export. It was a river borne trade and the Ioway held key river positions as well as millions of fur producing acres. As that era ended, roughly from 1825–1875, the Ioway ceded their land to a new farming economy. This process was well underway by the Blackhawk War and Spirit Lake Massacre. When the latter occurred the tribe was no longer in Iowa but had moved to what would be the extreme eastern end of the border between Nebraska and Kansas—their Great Nemaha Reservation. A generation after Spirit Lake (done by the Sioux) a conservative Ioway faction moved again, settling their Kansas-Nebraska holding in favor of yet unfarmed lands in Oklahoma. Thus they fled the small town culture in which I was raised.

In college and graduate school I didn't read about the Ioway probably because by the time Americanist anthropology got well started in the 1920s, there was felt to be too little aboriginal left in the tribe to warrant sending an ethnographer to them. Ethnographers' time and skills were in short supply until the 1960s, and they tended to gravitate toward high yield, relatively untouched Peoples. In any case nearby Peoples roughly similar to the Ioway were visited in the twenties and thirties, e. g., Radin went to the Winnebagos, Landes went to the Potawatomi, and Mead went to the Omaha; but the Ioway were not visited and written about save for a very slim account published in 1926 by A. Skinner (judged by Blaine to have many details and many gaps).

The mid-nineteenth century Ioway were lionized by the painter Catlin who took a number of them to Europe in 1841–45 to meet the King of France and various English notables including Disraeli. There is a valuable Ioway-written notebook from that trip which Blaine quotes fairly extensively. (It is noted that this was between the Blackhawk War and the Spirit Lake Massacre and was an historical event in its own right, that is, the first residents of Doniphan County to have a private audience with a King of France). Somewhat later a founding figure of Americanist anthropology, Lewis Henry Morgan, visited them in Kansas partly to record their social organization and partly to investigate alleged misdealings concerning land cessions. (Morgan was an

advocate of Indian rights but we usually think of him with the Iroquois in this connection). Those visits were in 1859 and 1862. In sum, the Ioway figured more into the formative period of American anthropology than into its classic, Boasian phase, which is why I didn't meet up with them in higher education.

Turning now to the nature of the ethnohistoric material that went into Blaine's book, it is essentially material from negotiations between Ioways and Whites: numbers of peltry (fur) packs delivered, the size and content of presents given to chiefs for redistribution, land cessions, complaints, annuities, stipends for a school, etc. Anything very far removed from the issue under negotiation is only sporadically represented in the book, not because Blaine didn't desire such material but because it simply wasn't recorded.

I would call that missing information ethnography, meaning what the Ioway would tell each other as distinct from what they would tell outside negotiating powers; from the book's perspective, one might call it the background to the negotiations. In general the Ioway record is negotiations-rich, since they were at peace with and important to outside European and American powers for 300 years, but the record is ethnography-poor and partly for the same reason: as good negotiators the Ioway kept their council in the background to the carefully worded communiques. These dispatches and communiques are the book's main value. Through them one sees the full etiquette of paternalist language ("our Father," "my grandchildren," etc.), and one gets a precise literary, documentary feel for the fur to farm land transition mentioned above. Blaine's careful rendering of this record makes her book of great value for regional, even continental, history.

Ethnography is not altogether lacking. There are valuable accounts from a man who married into the tribe for a short time, and accounts of inter-tribal raiding (which the Ioway seemed to love despite their peace with Whites), curing, and other topics. It is only that these accounts are scattered and anecdotal. One might fault the book by saying that Blaine should have gathered them all into one place, but I would counter that assembled fragments do not make a whole, and would propose that the best way to deal with the fragments is by working them against counterpart materials from neighboring tribes, that is, by shifting from whole-culture oriented studies (Ioway, Fox, etc.) to comparative studies at the level of the regional cultural system.

Such studies have proved effective on myths, rituals, and kinship terminologies—generally where the significance of a detail depends on its place in a structured context. Thus, certain of Skinner's lowly details might be illuminated from neighboring materials and vice versa. For this reason I don't object to Blaine's subordinating the available ethnography to her real story which is couched in the basically non-ethnographic yet still highly interesting language of White-Indian negotiations.

Donald Bahr  
Arizona State University

**Black Drink: A Native American Tea.** Charles M. Hudson, Editor. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979. VII-175 pp. With 11 fig. and 2 maps. \$11.00 cloth

"Black drink," or yaupon tea, was used in ritual and social contexts by the indigenous populations of southeastern North America. It passed into disuse when those populations were displaced westward beyond the geographic range of the plant from which it was brewed. Charles Hudson has now given us a competent study of the use of this caffeine-containing beverage in the times before "contact" and its surprising fate in the years since.

Shiu Ying Hu, the first contributor, provides an excellent chapter on the botany of *Ilex vomitoria* and other *Ilex* species. William L. Merrill follows with a meticulously documented review of the use of yaupon black drink among the Creek Confederacy, the Cherokees, Yuchis, Alabamas, Chickasaws, Choctaws and peripheral tribal groups. Jerald T. Milanich describes the origins and prehistoric distribution of black drink, for which there is a wealth of data in the Archaic, Hopewellian, Mississippian and early historic periods. Charles H. Fairbanks focuses on the historic and prehistoric use by the Creek Indians, where the use of yaupon was especially important, and follows its continued but declining popularity in the White agricultural South until cultural and economic pressures led to its virtual demise.

Fairbanks's account is interesting especially in the description of the development of Coca Cola, another caffeine-containing drink which is traceable to the innovative and spectacularly suc-