

**UCLA**

**American Indian Culture and Research Journal**

**Title**

The Struggle for the Georgia Coast: An Eighteenth-Century Spanish Retrospective on Guale and Mocama. American Museum of Natural History, Anthropological Papers, Number 75. By John E. Worth.

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55c160xw>

**Journal**

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 22(2)

**ISSN**

0161-6463

**Author**

Gallay, Alan

**Publication Date**

1998-03-01

**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/>

ity to overcome negative self-concepts, to improve self-awareness, and to ensure a vitalized Crow future. Such Native justification for allowing publications are too rare in the literature and need to be brought into the classroom, much as the Yup'ik teach that hoarded knowledge will cause the brain to rot.

Jay Miller  
Simon Fraser University

**The Struggle for the Georgia Coast: An Eighteenth-Century Spanish Retrospective on Guale and Mocama.** American Museum of Natural History, Anthropological Papers, Number 75. By John E. Worth. Athens: The University of Georgia Press. 222 pages. \$23.00 paper.

This highly useful and fascinating volume reconstructs the history of Spanish-allied Indians in the provinces of Mocama and Guale along the Georgia coast in the last half of the seventeenth century. The book revolves around fifteen documents which the author discovered in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. In 1739, Florida Governor Don Manuel de Montiano had assembled these documents as part of Spain's claims of prior occupation of Georgia to British usurpers who had colonized in 1733. England could care less about Spain's claim and was content to ignore it for the *fait accompli* of their new settlement. Fortunately for the modern-day researcher, Montiano's documentary record did more than prove Spanish occupation. These documents both outline and provide detail on Indian settlements along the Georgia coast—sea-islands and mainland—while also illustrating the reasons for the Spanish missions' decline and abandonment.

Anthropologist John E. Worth has translated the documents and filled in many of the gaps in the historical record. A hefty introduction delineates the story of the missions, while ably elucidating the external pressures faced by the Indian population. The documents themselves, then, provide the meat of the volume, each with an introduction and annotation. Dispersed throughout are extremely helpful and well-designed maps and tables.

The province of Mocama extended from the mouth of the St. Johns River north to St. Simons island, with Guale abutting from the mouth of the Altamaha river north to the Ogeechee River's mouth. In 1655 Guale had six primary mission towns and Mocama four. (Some had satellite villages.) The early history of

these missions and their peoples is only briefly outlined by Worth, who does note, however, that by the 1650s the settlement patterns of the precontact and protocontact period largely had disappeared, perhaps in part due to the Guale Revolt against the Spanish in 1597, but certainly also as part of the long-term missionization which would have disrupted land use and labor patterns. The result was fewer, but perhaps larger, settlements. (The overall Indian population, Worth argues, probably declined due to epidemics.) The author speculates that kin systems and chiefly lineages remained intact. As in the Spanish missions of Florida, many Indians retained their "identity" within the diverse cultures of the mission. The Spanish intermittently took censuses, which recorded Indian identity as well as whether or not the Indians were Christian.

In 1661 the Guale and Mocama missions came under attack—within twenty-five years both provinces would be abandoned. The first attackers were identified by the Spanish as Chichemeco, known to the English as the Westo. A few English from Virginia were in the force of Indians (accounts vary from 500 to 2,000) who invaded from the inland. The Chichemeco must have been armed by the Virginians since the Spanish did not sell weapons to Indians. Worth follows Marvin T. Smith (*Archaeology of Aboriginal Culture Change in the Interior Southeast: Depopulation During the Early Historic Period*, 1987), in positing that these Indians were displaced Erie of the Great Lakes region, refugees from the Iroquois wars who had tried to settle in Virginia. Unable to do so, they pushed further south. In the employ of, or as partners to, the Virginia traders, they raided Spanish missions as well as inland Indian groups to procure slaves to exchange to the English for guns and other trade goods. I believe that another reason for their attacks in a wide arc that extended from the Georgia coast through to central and northern Alabama was that as a populous, refugee people, they were seeking living space. Enslaving captives not only earned credits from traders, but forced survivors to flee, opening up new areas for settlement. Moreover, I question both Worth's and Smith's assertion that the arming of Chichemeco undid the balance of power by giving these Indians an unfair weapon advantage over southeast Amerindians. Seventeenth-century muskets were hardly much better in comparison to bows and arrows which could be shot more frequently and with greater accuracy. The Indians of Guale and Mocama had more than likely experienced a steep decline in their martial skills having lived on missions for

so long. Spending much time in agricultural fields in "female" tasks and working as laborers for the Spanish *repartimiento* gave them less time to hunt, which would have allowed them the opportunity of refining some of their martial arts; moreover, patterns of warfare had altered as well—mission Indians did not raid their neighbors with the frequency of non-mission Indians. Thus, it was not European weaponry which gave the Chichemeco their advantage, but their military proficiency, their large numbers, their drive to obtain both land and slaves, and the mission Indians' forced reliance on Spanish soldiers rather than themselves for protection.

The 1661 raid created refugees, but it also was countered by the Spanish who pursued the Chichemeco 180 leagues, or 540 miles. Spanish resolve apparently redirected Chichemeco attacks away from the Georgia coast to the interior "pagan" Indians unprotected by the Spanish. Among these were Yamasee. Worth asserts that the Chichemeco attacks probably strengthened ties between villages of diverse origins into a Yamasee confederacy. Certainly, town identities remained strong among the Yamasee, adding credence to his speculation. Whatever the case, Yamasee flocked to the Spanish missions. By 1673 nearly half of the fifty *repartimiento* sent to St. Augustine from Guale and Mocama were Yamasee, and they "outnumbered the total number of mission Indians" in Georgia, comprising 350 of 676 (p. 20). The Spanish provided refuge in exchange for labor; as in the Florida missions, Yamasee did not convert to Christianity in large numbers.

The settlement of Carolina in 1670 gravely threatened Guale and Mocama. Indians of the provinces "regularly visited both English and Spanish settlements" (pp. 24-25); thus the Yamasee established important connections that soon led them to return to their lands in Carolina. The Spanish attempt to remove the Carolina threat failed miserably, and by 1680 the Chichemeco, allied with other Indians, renewed their attacks on the Georgia coast. But pressure from the Chichemeco disappeared as they fell into war with Carolina. A new threat arose from the sea, however, as English and French pirates infested the Georgia sea-islands. A steady retreat from Georgia to Florida began. By 1683 pirates had put an end to Mocama. Most of the non-Christian Yamasee headed north and allied with the English. In 1684 they would raid the Spanish Florida missions for slaves and plunder. Many of the Guale and Mocama Christian Indians regrouped into three villages in Florida. Some of their villages were overrun in Carolina's assault against St. Augustine in 1702. Ultimately,

they and their descendants were removed to Cuba in 1763 when Spain ceded Florida to Great Britain.

This excellent volume is highly recommended for both scholars and students as an introduction to an important episode in the experiences of Native Americans along the Georgia coast.

*Alan Galloway*  
*Western Washington University*

**War Cries.** By Diane Glancy. Duluth, Minnesota: Holy Cow Press, 1997. 339 pages. \$16.95 paper.

This collection of nine plays by novelist and poet Diane Glancy presents the reader with a wide variety of dramatic explorations and experiments. The earliest play dates to 1984, and though the collection represents more than a decade of work, each of the plays shares the themes of reconciliation and a search for identity. At the heart of each of the plays is a wound which her writing both exposes and attempts to heal.

The majority of the collection's plays are presented in a social-realistic way. In these plays the talents of Glancy, a gifted novelist, are most obviously demonstrated. Her sensitivity, eye, and ear for her characters, all of whom are Native American, is almost unerring. Her dialogue captures the cadence and poetry in everyday language, revealing not only the complexity of emotions underneath her characters, but also the geography of the place they inhabit. The words of Glancy's characters are windows into a greater social, cultural, and spiritual predicament, at once ordinary and familiar, yet simultaneously voicing loss and searching.

"Weejob" is the first and earliest play in the collection, and the most beholding to Western dramaturgy. The play is a character-driven exploration of friendship, love, and acceptance. It is the story of Weejob and his friend, Pick-Up, who, as the play reveals, falls in love with Weejob's daughter, Sweet Potato. Weejob is the older of the two men and a traditional leader more concerned with the spiritual than the day-to-day. Weejob is a man of visions and feelings, yet marginalized by a society more concerned with the material. He responds to his predicament by painting and posting signs of prophecy and understanding, for it is his responsibility to tell what he knows. When Weejob discovers that his daughter and Pick-Up want to marry, it is for