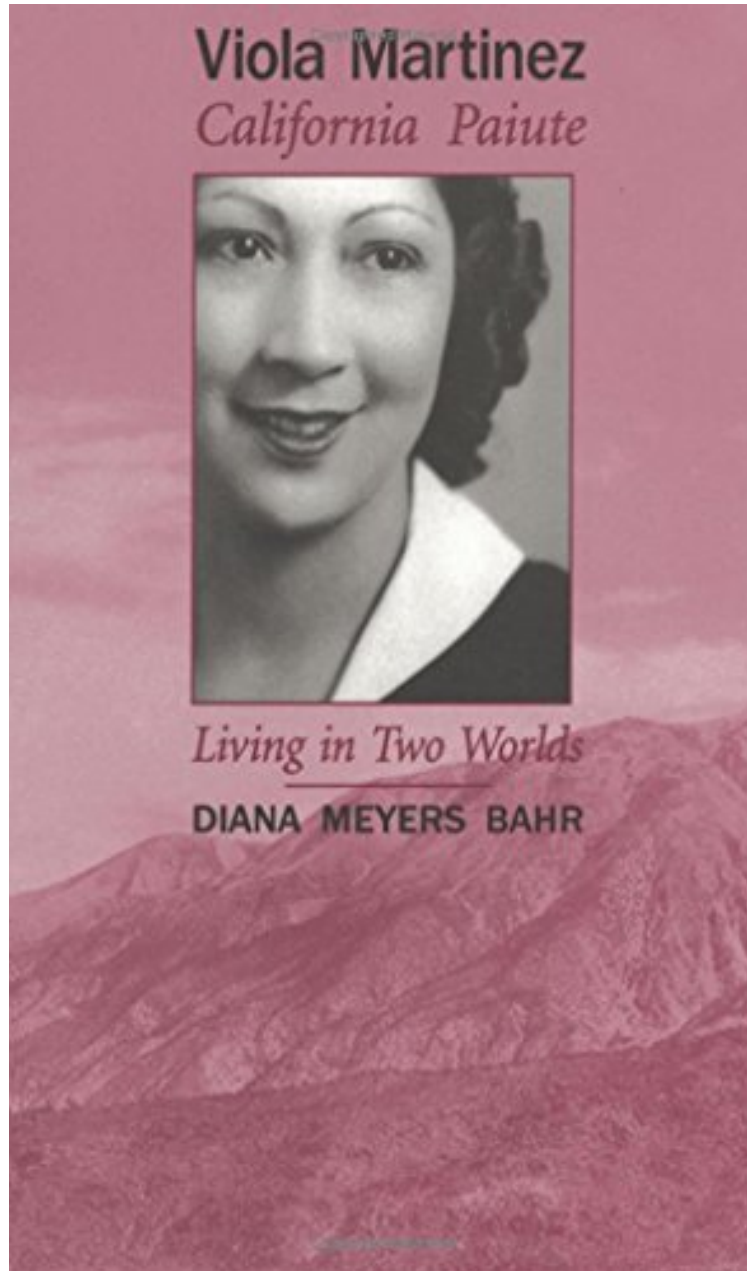


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## Viola Martinez, California Paiute: Living in Two Worlds

*Diana Meyers Bahr*

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**Diana Meyers Bahr : Viola Martinez, California Paiute: Living in Two Worlds** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Viola Martinez, California Paiute: Living in Two Worlds:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Personal heroes: John Muir, Mark Twain, and Viola Martinez  
By david mcneill  
I found this book totally by chance wandering the library shelves in the history section. After reading dear, sweet Viola's story, my life was changed. If it wasn't for Diana Bahr having written the book, I would have never known about this wonderful universal woman of our time. A real heroine and role model that all people need to learn about, not just the tribe she came from. I lived right in her home town and never got the chance to meet her. She died just before I found the book. But I will never forget her. God Bless her and all her family.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Mastery in a world on the margin  
By Kenneth L. Anthony  
Viola Martinez, California Paiute: Living in Two Worlds  
Sociologists and social historians once commonly believed that individuals suffered negative psychological effects from the uncertainty of being on a margin between different cultures. In Viola Martinez, California Paiute, author and oral historian Diana Meyers Bahr holds that Martinez' life story refutes that view, showing instead that an individual with ability can use the margin straddling cultures as a place of opportunity. Viola Martinez' memories disclose numerous experiences of marginality, but also of achievement. More importantly, Bahr's account emphasizes Martinez' personal agency in negotiating the margin. When Viola realized she no longer fit exactly either in white or Indian society, she decided she needed to do whatever she did for herself. (p.67) She became aware of her own thinking and learning, she challenged herself to master white skills and determined to disprove a theory that "Indian brains were different." Like her subject, Diana Bahr negotiates two worlds, historically placing Viola Martinez' story in context, interpreting and analyzing it while respecting a life that may serve as an inspiration to anyone in a marginal situation. In today's rapidly changing world, that includes all of us.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Viola Martinez a California Paiute teacher  
By Erika E. St John  
Very interesting history on a Paiute woman who struggled to educate herself and was a counselor at Mansanar internant camp

The life story of Viola Martinez, an Owens Valley Paiute Indian of eastern California, extends over nine decades of the twentieth century. Viola experienced forced assimilation in an Indian boarding school, overcame racial stereotypes to pursue a college degree, and spent several years working at a Japanese American internment camp during World War II. Finding herself poised uncertainly between Indian and white worlds, Viola was determined to turn her marginalized existence into an opportunity for personal empowerment. In *Viola Martinez, California Paiute*, Diana Meyers Bahr recounts Viola's extraordinary life story and examines her strategies for dealing with acculturation. Bahr allows Viola to tell her story in her own words, beginning with her early years in Owens Valley, where she learned traditional lifeways, such as gathering pions, from her aunt. In the summers, she traveled by horse and buggy into the High Sierras where her aunt traded with Basque shepherders. Viola was sent to the Sherman Institute, a federal boarding school with a mandate to assimilate American Indians into U.S. mainstream culture. Punished for speaking Paiute at the boarding school, Viola and her cousin climbed fifty-foot palm trees to speak their native language secretly. Realizing that, despite her efforts, she was losing her language, Viola resolved not just to learn English but to master it. She earned a degree from Santa Barbara State College and pursued a career as social worker. During World War II, Viola worked as an employment counselor for Japanese American internees at the Manzanar War Relocation Authority camp. Later in life, she became a teacher and worked tirelessly as a founding member of the Los Angeles American Indian Education Commission.

About the Author  
Diana Meyers Bahr is the author of *From Mission to Metropolis: Cupeo Indian Women in Los Angeles*; *Viola Martinez, California Paiute: Living in Two Worlds*; and *The Unquiet Nisei: An Oral History of the Life of Sue Kunitomi Embrey*.