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Smoak: *Ghost Dances and Identity: Prophetic Religion and American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century*

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during the terminal Early Archaic (6,450–5,200 B.P.) and Fremont (1,600–800 B.P.) eras, but the site experienced minimal occupation during the Late Archaic period (3,100–1,600 B.P.). By combining the number of hearths that were encountered at Camels Back Cave with the projected number of other hearths that may be present there, the authors infer that the site received relatively infrequent use/occupation, experiencing no more than about six visits every century during periods of peak utilization. All in all, the small number of stratified hearths and the lack of fire reddening below most of them strongly suggest that most aboriginal occupants of the cave rarely stayed there for more than several days at a time. If this is true, then the site functioned primarily as a short-term camp during virtually its entire occupational history. The most intensive use of Camels Back Cave seems to have occurred during Early Archaic times, when activities there were focused on the mass collecting of jackrabbits and it served as a foraging base camp.

This monograph represents a major contribution to the study of Bonneville Basin paleoecology and prehistory, by providing an example of how future small cave sites within this region might best be investigated. The Camels Back Cave research team's fine-grained approach to exposing and documenting highly stratified deposits maximized the amount of data that was recovered, thus allowing them to accurately reconstruct the site's history and the likely role that it played within the local settlement system. The careful selection of analytic specialists is also notable, and was a major factor in the overall high quality and comprehensive nature of this volume. Both Dave Schmitt and David Madsen are to be congratulated for organizing such an impressive undertaking. Perhaps their work will motivate others to conduct similar investigations at appropriate sheltered sites within the Great Salt Lake Desert, especially in the context of regional settlement studies.



Ghost Dances and Identity: Prophetic Religion and American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century

Gregory E. Smoak

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, 302 pages,
3 illustrations, \$44.95 (cloth).

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In this engaging, lively, and readable work, assistant professor of history at Colorado State University Gregory E. Smoak provides an ethnohistorical study of the Newe people that examines issues critical to general Native American history by focusing on the ethnogenesis of the Shoshone and Bannock, the establishment of the Fort Hall reservation, and the Ghost Dance.

Mooney and others have analyzed the Ghost Dance and viewed it as a result of severe deprivation among the tribes that adopted it, but Smoak shows the Ghost Dance to be part of a creative effort by the Newe to define and maintain their social, economic, and religious integrity. His analysis provides insight into the dynamics of identity formation and the complex relationships between various native and white cultural groups. Smoak stresses the dynamic, negotiated, contingent, and constructed nature of identity, while convincingly demonstrating the broad continuities of Newe culture before, during, and after the Ghost Dance period.

In Part One, *Identity and Prophecy in the Newe World*, Smoak examines the historical and cultural background of the Newe, the group from which the Shoshone and Bannock derive. He suggests that the Shoshone and Bannock were most likely a single people in the 1600s. Each group's separate identity, along with increasingly centralized group leadership, developed in response to several historical factors: Paiutes migrated from the east; warfare broke out in the north, mainly with the Blackfeet; technological changes arrived, specifically the introduction of the horse and firearms; and disease, especially smallpox, decimated the population and inhibited expansion into Blackfeet territory. The designa-

tions Shoshone and Bannock eventually came to refer to two cultural and status groups, but Smoak stresses that—despite mutually unintelligible languages—the groups freely intermarried, were multilingual, and had permeable and fluid boundaries even through the early reservation period. Thus, these two groups are ideal for demonstrating the dynamic, socially constructed nature of ethnic identity within the Newe world itself, in relationship to other Native groups, and (eventually) in relationship to European migrants and settlers.

At times, the opening chapter on the origins of Newe identity almost seems to read like the classic evolutionist theory of Herbert Spencer, who proposed warfare as the crucial mechanism for the inevitable growth of society into ever more complex and centralized formations. Spencer had a rather dim view of Great Basin peoples, perhaps because they disproved his theoretical framework. Smoak, by contrast, uses data to steer his careful speculations on social change, rather than fitting data into overarching social theory. Archeological data suggest that the early Newe were hunter/gatherers with a variety of subsistence strategies and fluid kin-based social relations. The Lewis and Clark journals document this, as well as attesting to the widespread use of horses. During the period of the fur trade, the Newe established a complex trade network.

Ultimately, the Newe differentiated into two distinct groups divided by unequal power relations and material wealth: mounted buffalo hunters and pedestrian hunter/gatherers. Smoak proposes that this subsistence division eventually resulted in two increasingly distinct ethnic groups, as part of an ongoing internal dynamic, and in reaction to the encroachment of white Americans, first as migrants across Newe territory and later as settlers.

In his second chapter, *Shamans, Prophets and Missionaries*, Smoak examines the pre-contact religion of the Newe and its subsequent dialogue with imported forms of Christianity, particularly Mormonism. In portraying Newe social systems and religious beliefs, the author sagely reminds readers that there was no fixed pre-contact “tradition,” but rather dynamic systems, continually in flux. The core of Newe religion consisted of shamanism and prophecy. Both of these elements played into the eventual acceptance, interpretation, and adaptation of the Ghost Dance, primarily among the Bannock and to some extent the Shoshone.

Shamanism stressed access to supernatural power directly by individuals or through the mediation of powerful practitioners, each of whom sought power from spiritual beings. Certain shamans, taught through their whole life by spirit helpers, were able to suck out illness and recover lost souls. Their religious practices were charismatic and individualized, although the healing rituals themselves were a social event.

Smoak considers a second religious element, prophecy, through a long history of prophet dances and prophecies of cosmic destruction and renewal. In this examination, he shows that the Ghost Dance did not simply arise from material deprivation, but in fact represented continuity with antecedent religious tradition. He then demonstrates how millennial Christianity fit into the larger Newe complex of beliefs by stressing world destruction followed by cosmic fulfillment. This was particularly true of Mormonism, in which Indian peoples were to play a role in millennial fulfillment.

Having set the stage by showing the dynamic social and religious institutions within Newe society, Smoak focuses on radical transformations, as well as deep seated continuities, during white American incursions into the region: the formation of both tribal and pan-Indian identities; a consolidation of populations through treaty and pressure for land; and adaptation to the restrictions of reservation life. Chapter Three, *Treaty Making and Consolidation: The Politics of Ethnogenesis*, traces the history of white settlement beginning in the 1860s, including the violence between non-natives and natives. Smoak demonstrates how the Bannocks and Shoshone differentiated themselves by whether or not they accepted farming and other acculturative indicators such as dress, and by how they dealt with the United States government and with each other. This chapter stresses the variety of actively adaptive strategies people employed in the face of externally forced change. For example, the Bannock largely rejected farming, while the Shoshone took it up; for both groups, the goal was to maintain social solidarity, social identities, and favorable relations with the Americans.

Fort Hall, and other reserved lands, became an added stop on the traditional seasonal round of subsistence activities that were still necessary to supplement the food and cash the government had promised but not provided; they were also important to establish and

maintain distinct social identities. For example, when white settlers tried to consolidate the Newe on a single reservation, each group attempted to secure reservation lands that included areas of its own traditional territory. It was in this time of treaty-making, both successful and unsuccessful, that both groups consolidated social and geographical identities, leading to the adoption of the Ghost Dance, which among other strategies was used to define and sustain tribal and Indian identities.

In the fourth chapter, *Two Trails: Resistance, Accommodation, and the 1870s Ghost Dance*, Smoak proposes that the first Ghost Dance did not simply represent a disparate set of beliefs adapted by a variety of groups, but that it constituted the first pan-Indian movement to originate in the Great Basin. The first Ghost Dance came at the beginning of a decade that was to end with wars of resistance, particularly the Bannock War. While that war did not encompass the entirety of the Bannock people (and indeed Bannocks fought on both sides, native and white), it did tend to consolidate resistance (as part of Bannock identity) and accommodation (as part of Shoshone identity). Thus identity that was once marked by distinct subsistence patterns now focused on separate political and cultural dispositions. The Shoshone and Bannock were differentiated as political groups but—on another level—unified as Indian through common experiences and the religious expression of the Ghost Dance.

In his fifth and final chapter, *Culture Wars, Indianness, and the 1890 Ghost Dance*, Smoak analyzes how the Ghost Dance was crucial for identity maintenance for the Shoshone and Bannock. The author does not propose a simplistic resistance/accommodation model, but rather demonstrates how both strategies served to strengthen a common native identity and perpetuate the

dual identity of Shoshone and Bannock in the face of assimilation and displacement. The Ghost Dance allowed native peoples to constitute themselves as distinct groups, with a distinct origin and destiny, in the context of white America. The Ghost Dance constituted a form of resistance, particularly to education, and the fact that the Shoshones participated less often in the Ghost Dance than the Bannocks provided distinction between the two groups. The author convincingly shows how identity remains fluid, and that there were and continue to be heterogeneous strategies for maintaining identity among both the Shoshone and Bannocks.

Although Smoak warns the reader about the extreme views expressed by various white American narrators in his text (who themselves operated within an ongoing process of ethnogenesis), he balances the complex motivations and strategies of all the historical actors well. Ultimately, this is a brilliant work that—in the best tradition of ethnohistory—illuminates native understandings of historical occurrences while simultaneously demonstrating the complexity of native-white interactions. Even more importantly, it recognizes native agency as well as cultural continuity and adaptation in the service of ongoing identity formation. In the context of a fine-grained historical exposition treating the Shoshone and Bannocks as distinct cultural groups united by history and identity, Smoak convincingly demonstrates that the Ghost Dance was far more about identity formation and cultural persistence than it was a simple reaction to outside pressures or deprivation. Readers, particularly aspiring students, are well advised to peruse the acknowledgments, where the author reveals collaborative scholarship at its best, and shows his own enthusiasm for and joy in his profession.



