## UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

## Title

Peoples of Prehistoric South Dakota. By Larry J. Zimmerman.

**Permalink** https://escholarship.org/uc/item/54d516zk

**Journal** American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 11(1)

**ISSN** 0161-6463

**Author** Tiffany, Joseph A.

Publication Date

## DOI

10.17953

## **Copyright Information**

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

eScholarship.org

Powered by the <u>California Digital Library</u> University of California *as such* is always the exclusive property of Western (monotheistic) man at the expense of all other religious creeds.

Métis leader Charles Colcord ("Indian Religion Before the Missionaries," Wabanaki Alliance, Jan., 1980) supports Deloria's orientation toward pantheism by arguing that Christian missionaries fostered the monotheistic idea of a "Great Spirit" among Indians; native peoples actually believed in a "pantheon of demigods" who controlled their universe. Colcord also notes, contra Harrod, that traditional Indians did not mix their ethics with religion since moral principles of good and evil were not sharply defined. Hence, there was never a conception of an "Indian hell" or heaven.

In conclusion both books reviewed herein demonstrated considerable promise in their inception. Both fail abysmally in living up to themselves, largely because they ultimately have less to do with their own purported subject matter than with their respective authors' need to intellectually absorb Native America into Euroamerica. Both Powers and Harrod are guilty of the most common sin in contemporary American intellectualism: both have utterly ignored the voices emerging from the non-European reality about which they profess to write.

*M. A. Jaimes and R. B. Williams* University of Colorado

**Peoples of Prehistoric South Dakota**. By Larry J. Zimmerman. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985. 143 pp. \$16.50 Cloth.

The culture history of the prehistoric and historic Native Americans in South Dakota has been the subject of anthropological research for over 100 years. Yet, until recently, there has been surprisingly little attention paid by scholars to presentation of this vast wealth of knowledge in a way that is understandable and interesting to the general public. The objective of this book is to address this concern by providing an overview of South Dakota prehistory directed toward a lay audience.

This volume is organized in a similar manner to other popular regional prehistories, notably Lynn Alex's *Iowa's Past: A Guide*  to Prehistoric Archaeology (1980). Like Alex's work Zimmerman's book represents the center piece of a ten year public archaeology program in South Dakota involving reconstitution of the state archaeological society, development of an amateur archaeological certification program, and dissemination of information on South Dakota archaeology through a pamphlet series, filmstrips and the publication of scholarly studies through the Special Publication series of the South Dakota Archaeological Society.

Because this book is a popular accounting of South Dakota archaeology, it presents both a general picture of what archaeologists have learned and how archaeological research is conducted. Over one-third of the text deals with general topics such as the importance of archaeological research, archaeological methods, the history of archaeological research in South Dakota, the material culture of the region, South Dakota geography, physical anthropology, archaeological conservation, public participation in on-going research and directions of future research in South Dakota archaeology.

This book presents the prehistory of South Dakota chronologically in a series of nine chapters which summarize the major prehistoric cultural traditions and over-all cultural developments in the state. In each chapter, Zimmerman gives a brief synopsis of the current archaeological information and interjects within each summary applications of methodological concepts such as ethnographic analogy, or important New World anthropological issues as they relate to South Dakota archaeology such as plant domestication, development of village life, formulation of exchange systems and impacts of acculturation and culture contact on resident populations.

Although brief, Zimmerman meets his stated objectives with this book. The book is well organized, is very readable and will serve as an informative source book for the general public interested in South Dakota's past.

As a first attempt, however, the book does have some minor problems. The presentation of the Great Oasis aspect is somewhat confusing and contradictory with respect to the well-known Middle Missouri tradition. Perhaps this confusion, as the author notes, is due to the fact that the Great Oasis aspect is poorly understood by archaeologists. Others may have questions regarding Zimmerman's presentation of the Oneota tradition as well. Excellent use is made of ethnographic analogies in reconstructing Paleoindian lifeways, but Zimmerman makes little use of the rich ethnographic record of the historic Plains Village tribes in his discussion of their prehistoric antecedents in South Dakota.

There are instances in the text where the author, in an attempt to synthesize data, has oversimplified the presentation. For example, in describing how bison may have been driven and killed in Paleoindian times, the author states "... people jumped out from behind the rocks or brush and waved blankets." (p. 53). Hides would have been a better word choice than blankets in this instance. Similarly, the concept of Primary Forest Efficiency is not explained well nor how researchers derive "kinship patterns" from pottery designs (p. 47).

The most serious shortfall of the book are the illustrations. The selection of what to illustrate by chapter is good. The problem is that the vast majority of the illustrations are done with a stippling technique that, in my opinion, simply does not work. There are no scales with most of the artifacts, and some figures are repeated (Figures 41 and 49) with no new information added. More important, many of the illustrations are either copied or redrawn from other sources without credit given to the original source.

Preparing popular syntheses of the archaeological record especially on a regional or state level is not a task most archaeologists would undertake or can do. Zimmerman has succeeded admirably, however, in presenting a thoughtful overview of South Dakota archaeology and of archaeology as a discipline for the public. I am sure it will be read by many South Dakotans interested in South Dakota's past.

Joseph A. Tiffany Scientific Resource Surveys, Inc., Huntington Beach, CA

**Goodbird The Indian: His Story**. By Edward Goodbird, as told to Gilbert Wilson. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1914, rpt. 1985. 78 pp. \$5.95 Paper.

This facsimile edition brings back into circulation the as-told-to autobiography of Edward Goodbird, who lived from 1870 to 1938