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Review of The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890

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The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890. By James Mooney. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. Introductions, illustrations, authorities cited. xxvi + 484 pp. \$65.00 cloth, \$25.00 paper.

At last an affordable version of Mooney's classic monograph is available that maintains the integrity of the 1896 Bureau of American Ethnology publication to the last detail, including the information-laden appendixes, illustrations, and the original pagination (pp. 653-1136). Additional features include an updated map depicting the sphere of Ghost Dance influence, five colorized plates, and an introduction by Raymond J. DeMallie delineating Mooney's contributions to ethnographic research in North America.

As DeMallie aptly points out in the introduction, most people still have a distorted image of the messianic Ghost Dance (p. xv) that became a full-fledged religion after 1889. Numerous books and articles describing this

syncretic religion have appeared since Mooney went to Oklahoma Territory and other parts of the American West in the winter of 1890-91 to investigate the Ghost Dance, but *The Ghost-Dance Religion* is the foremost comprehensive account.

Mooney's research methods, influenced in part by his "experience in the newspaper business [that] sensitized him to a good story" (p. xviii), combined with an enthusiasm for detailed participant-observation, led him to remote areas of present day Oklahoma, Nevada, and South Dakota to unravel the mystery behind the messianic movement fervently followed by many Indians. He gathered pieces of the Ghost Dance puzzle through interviews with Wovoka, some tribal delegates who learned the dance from Wovoka, and Ghost Dance participants. Significantly, Mooney was one of the few non-Indians to photograph the dances in southwestern Oklahoma Territory; illustrations derived from the original photographs enhance his eyewitness descriptions of the dance. That Mooney was permitted to photograph Ghost Dance ceremonies attests to the excellent rapport he established with Indian peoples wherever he went. Elderly Indians in southwestern Oklahoma still speak fondly of Mooney.

Perhaps the most salient feature of the Ghost Dance monograph is that Mooney departed from the typical Powellian evolutionary framework of the late nineteenth century. Chapter 16 examines similar revitalization movements in the Old World and the United States. Instead of placing them in a unilineal scheme, Mooney interpreted revitalization movements as common human reactions to cultural deprivation and stress. Mooney's interpretation of the "comparative method" is analogous to today's cross-cultural approach in ethnology. Indeed, the Ghost Dance monograph is a timeless piece.

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