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Review of *Hostiles?: The Lakota Ghost Dance and Buffalo Bill's Wild West* By Sam A. Maddra & *Ghost Dances and Identity: Prophetic Religion and American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century* By Gregory E. Smoak

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REVIEW ESSAY

Hostiles?: The Lakota Ghost Dance and Buffalo Bill's Wild West. By Sam A. Maddra. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006. xi + 277 pp. Maps, photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95.

Ghost Dances and Identity: Prophetic Religion and American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century. By Gregory E. Smoak. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. xiii + 289 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$44.95.

GHOST DANCING ANEW

The history and significance of the Ghost Dance received renewed scholarly attention in 2006, as these two fine but very different works attest. Sam A. Maddra's study adds new material to the significant literature about the best-known incarnation of the Ghost Dance, which flourished among the Lakotas and gained infamy by association with 1890's tragedy at Wounded Knee. Gregory E. Smoak's book proceeds in a much different direction by examining Ghost Dances among the Shoshones and Bannocks, along with those groups' changing identities during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Together they not only enrich our understanding of Ghost Dance movements, but also contribute to our comprehension of tribal, Great Plains, and U.S. history.

Since Smoak's *Ghost Dances and Identity: Prophetic Religion and American Indian Ethnogenesis in the Nineteenth Century* focuses on people and events centered in Idaho and Wyoming, much of the work has limited application to the Great Plains. But given Wounded Knee's significance and the fact that Wovoka's Ghost Dance traveled through the region to reach Plains tribes, students of Great Plains history will find the book of value.

Smoak covers a remarkable sweep of time in his exquisitely researched, elegantly produced volume. He deepens our knowledge of the Shoshones and Bannocks by beginning his analysis before their ancestors met Euro-Americans and extending it well into the twentieth century. His wide-ranging introduction to the people includes a thorough discussion of pre-Ghost Dance religion, emphasizing shamanism and prophecy, elements critical to understanding cultural dynamics and the appearance of the Ghost Dances.

This detailed background proves critical to understanding the Ghost Dances and how Shoshones and Bannocks responded to the movements as well as how the movements affected Shoshone and Bannock life. When the narrative gets to the 1870 and 1889 movements, it starts to sizzle, making welcome contributions to the field. For one, it treats the Ghost Dances as part of an ongoing, living spiritual world of ongoing, living people. For another, it connects the Ghost Dance movements as related periods of intense religious activity and thereby narrates a tale of historical continuity rather than one of anomaly. Yet another strength derives from Smoak's discussion of the

context in which the non-Native population received the Ghost Dance movements. Too often historians write as if events happened in a religious vacuum. Euro-Americans and officials who crafted Indian policy and read about and responded to the Ghost Dances had religious values of their own, and Smoak does a fine job bringing this background into view. On a more important level, he provides a sophisticated interpretation of how Shoshones and Bannocks at once made the Ghost Dances their own through unique interpretations and, through the Ghost Dances, experienced the beginnings of a new pan-Indian identity.

By focusing on the Lakotas, Maddra's *Hostiles?: The Lakota Ghost Dance and Buffalo Bill's Wild West* tells a more traditional Ghost Dance story, but offers several intriguing twists and revelations. Maddra emphasizes the period 1890-1892, zeroing in on twenty-three Lakota Ghost Dancers who had been incarcerated at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, and released to the custody of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Cody hired them to perform in his Wild West exhibition, using them as attention-getting players on a European tour. The Wounded Knee tragedy received extensive news coverage in Europe, and Cody made the most of the Lakotas as a timely attraction and to bolster the authenticity he claimed for his spectacle.

The title's question points to a central theme in the book: assessing what, if anything, qualified the Lakota Ghost Dancers as hostiles. According to U.S. government officials, simple adherence to the movement met the standard, although Maddra accurately points out the religion advocated peace. From the government's perspective, though, it marked resistance to programs meant to "advance" American Indians. Whether or not Cody viewed the Ghost Dancers as hostiles, he marketed them as such to audiences hungry to see authentic, exotic representatives of the American West.

Another interesting twist to this Ghost Dance story involves the role of the Wild West show itself. As the Ghost Dance hit the Lakota reservations, so did a group of Lakotas returning from a tour with the exhibition. Indian

reformers and government officials, suspecting involvement in the show threatened attempts to make civilized farmers out of the Lakotas, sought a ban on further Indian participation. Cody countered by arguing those Lakotas who had been with him overwhelmingly resisted the Ghost Dance and, in many cases, discouraged it. Building on that argument, Cody not only avoided the ban but also succeeded in hiring the twenty-three incarcerated Ghost Dancers. Government officials allowed this, figuring it reduced government expense, removed perceived troublemakers and prevented them from inciting additional problems, and might cow the Ghost Dancers by exposing them to the numerical, economic, and technological superiority of U.S. and European civilization. However their journey abroad affected them, Short Bull and Kicking Bear, two Ghost Dance leaders, appear to have stood fast in their belief in the movement and practiced it into the twentieth century.

In addition to these points, Maddra's book contributes to Ghost Dance historiography by emphasizing Short Bull's accounts of the movement among the Lakotas. Much of what has been written about the Lakota Ghost Dance relies heavily on accounts recorded by critics and opponents. Short Bull's narratives, included in the book's appendix, help balance the record by adding a believer's voice.

These books, taken together or individually, push in a helpful and welcome direction, emphasizing as they do that the Ghost Dance movements had much more to them than the Lakota version associated with the tragedy at Wounded Knee in 1890. The Ghost Dance movements survived Wounded Knee, rested on a peaceful message, emerged from a long developing spiritual history, reflected the confluence and complexity of people and ideas in the West, and contributed to dynamic American Indian cultures and societies that did not perish with the frontier.

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