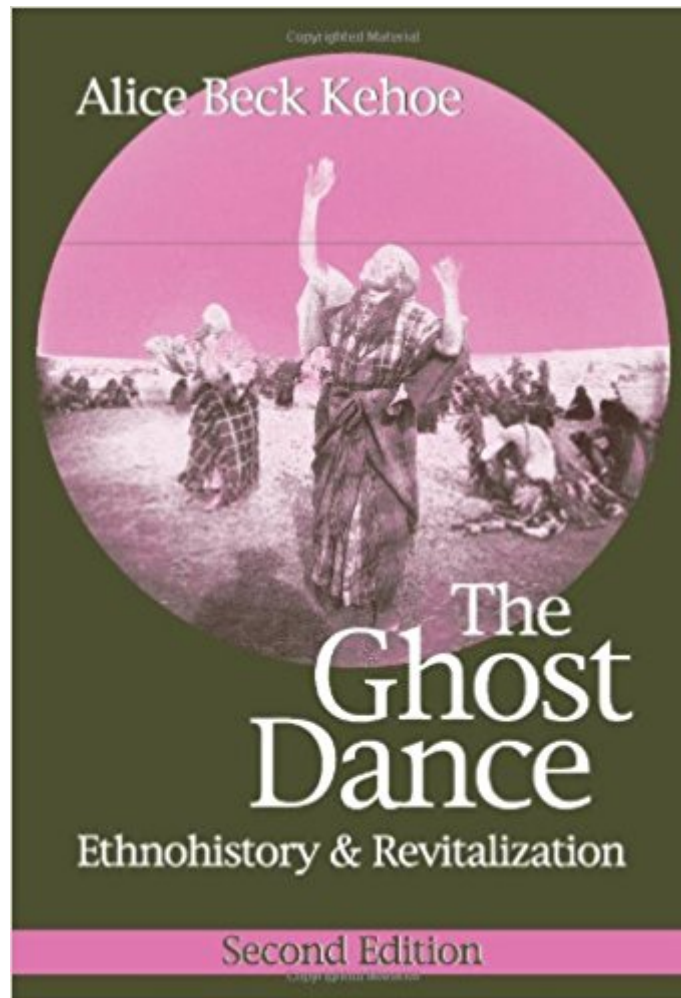




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# The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory And Revitalization



## Synopsis

In this fascinating ethnohistorical case study of North American Indians, the Ghost Dance religion is the backbone for Kehoe's exploration of significant aspects of American Indian life and her quest to learn why some theories become popular. In Part 1, she combines knowledge gained from her firsthand experiences living among and speaking with Indian elders with a careful analysis of historical accounts, providing a succinct yet insightful look at people, events, and institutions from the 1800s to the present. She clarifies unique and complex relationships among Indian peoples and dispels many of the false pretenses promoted by United States agencies over two centuries. In Part 2, Kehoe surveys some of the theories used to analyze the events described in Part 1, allowing readers to see how theories develop, to think critically about various perspectives, and to draw their own conclusions. Kehoe's gripping presentation and analysis pave the way for just and constructive Indian-White relations. Visit [waveland.com](http://waveland.com) for a complete list of modern and classic ethnographies on Apache, Comanche, Crow, Navajo, Papago, Pueblo, Shoshone, Sioux, and other American Indian cultures.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An excellent in-depth analysis of the past and continuing importance of the Ghost Dance.

Particularly interesting is the two-part division between the historical (including ethnohistorical) and ethnographic dimension. Easily the best currently available text on the Ghost Dance movement, and a comprehensive introduction to this important topic." --Tok Thompson, University of Southern California  
"Most students want to know what really happened at Wounded Knee, what happened to the Indian warriors who defeated General Custer, and what does all this have to do with religious

movements and survival under almost intolerable stress. Here you will find out." --Martha C. Ward,  
University of New Orleans

Other Waveland Press titles by Alice Beck Kehoe: *Shamans and Religion: An Anthropological Exploration in Critical Thinking* (ISBN 9781577661627) and *The Kensington Runestone: Approaching a Research Question Holistically* (ISBN 9781577663713). Titles of related interest also from Waveland Press: Garbarino-Sasso, *Native American Heritage, Third Edition* (ISBN 9780881337730); Hultkrantz, *Native Religions of North America: The Power of Visions and Fertility* (ISBN 9780881339857); and Johnson, *Also Called Sacajewa: Chief Woman's Stolen Identity* (ISBN 9781577665342).

Interesting book about Walkers work. I have just purchased Walker's book to get the information first hand. That said this was very good with a ton of detailed information.

I needed this for my Native American Cultures class; it has great detail and history on certain important figures during these times, and what their contributions were to their nations. Very interesting read!

The book gives a good glimpse into one of the numerous revival type manifestations of the Native American sacred nature worship. The Ghost Dance is often seen as a "last gasp" of the plains Indians and their sacred buffalo worshipping culture but it comes off in this book as a reemergence of a living Native American religion. Just as other religions have had to change and adapt to new conditions and environments so too have the American Indians added on to their interpretations of their reverence for Mother Earth and Father Sun. The Ghost Dance as presented in this book is not a "last gasp" but an add on synthesis which greatly enhances Native American interpretation of the Cosmos. The white men couldn't seem to understand the Native American way of thinking and tried to extinguish the Ghost Dance at Wounded Knee. The US cavalry couldn't comprehend that the Ghost Dance was in the hearts of the Native Americans and not so soon to be put aside even though deadly force was used against the devotees. You would have to see the Wounded Knee Massacre as purification and an ultimate sacrifice that very few could ever even contemplate. Another great and sacred mystery in the Native American view of the cosmos. This book heightens the complexity of the Ghost Dance religion.

Great product. Good service and great condition. The book had no highlighting and was perfect for the little use I needed from it.

Anyone who assumes this book is simply one more work on the Ghost Dance will overlook a vital resource. Kehoe begins with a thorough survey of James Mooney's classic study of the Ghost Dance. She then compares Jack Wilson's (Wovoka) foundation for the revitalistic movement with other contemporary movements among American Indians. Her analysis takes Kehoe into the influence of Black Elk on the Lakota caught in the conflict between the larger world and reservation life. She continues with her insights into the second Wounded Knee and reminds us of the protests, many led by A.I.M., during the 1960s and 70s. The second part of the book is directed at anthropology students but will instruct anyone who is interested in what happens to religion when one people dominates another. Kehoe leads us through revitalization movements across North America, including one in Canada where she did her dissertation research. Her work helps us understand why Indian cultures persist and provide a viable life for so many Native Americans both on and off the reservation. [...]

Ms. Kehoe did a good job at tracing the practice of the ghost dance from the time that Wovoka (A Paiute medicine man) was given this ceremony to the massacre by the military at Wounded Knee Creek South Dakota in 1890 to the second incident at Wounded Knee Creek in 1973. For people interested in seeing the ghost dance watch the dance in the movie "Billy Jack" after Billy Jack goes through the ceremony with the rattlesnake. I have heard that Wovoka's son or son-in-law supervised that scene of the movie. Basically the people would dance until they would faint from exhaustion, and while unconscious they would see into the spirit world something similar to an OBE. On page 62: Ms. Kehoe states that Nick Black Elk (Sioux holy man) was a practicing Catholic. It is true that Black Elk went to mass after he married the second time. However; the prayer that Black Elk offered on Harney Peak, and is recorded in the book "Black Elk Speaks" John G. Neihardt, it is abundantly clear that his spiritual beliefs in Wakan Tanka (Sioux name for the Great Spirit) never wavered. He may have went along with Catholicism for peace in the family, or to stop the proselytizing church members. I used the same tactic early in life. Ms. Kehoe; made one statement on page 65 that made me angry! She implies that Nick Black Elk had partial blindness by using gunpowder in his yuwipi healing ceremony to fool the Indians into thinking the spirit helpers had arrived by throwing a pinch of gunpowder in the fire. With my understanding of Sioux spirituality, and the properties of gunpowder. I state categorically that this is impossible! 20 years ago; I used gunpowder to reload the

cartridges for my high powered rifle. In the Yuwipi ceremony the Indians remove all furniture from the room, and place quilts over the doors and windows to block all light from entering the room, and the wicasa pejuta or wicasa wakan (medicine man or holy man) has his hands tied behind his back with rawhide, and then they usually wrap him up in a star quilt like a mummy and the quilt is tied around his body. The wicasa pejuta or wicasa wakan is placed on the floor, and the lamp is put out leaving the people in total darkness (there is no fire, and the Yuwipi man is tied up in a quilt; making it impossible to use gunpowder in this manner). Ms. Kehoe may have meant the Inipi (sweat lodge) ceremony so I will describe that to you. A sweat lodge structure is built of saplings or willow limbs, and a large fire is built to heat rocks until they are red hot. While the rocks are heating they dig a hole in the center of the structure to hold the rocks, and the removed dirt is used to build a mound to the east of the structure, then the Indians cover the ground with sage, and quilts are put over the structure. Water is poured over the rocks making steam inside the structure. (It would be impossible for Nick Black Elk or any wicasa wakan to use gunpowder on the rocks. Everyone is drenched with steam, and is sweating profusely. Gunpowder will not burn or explode if it gets wet. This is the reason for the saying (keep your powder dry.).) I am NOT asking you to take my word for any of this. You can read about the Inipi and Yuwipi ceremonies in "Lakota Belief And Ritual" James R. Walker, "The Sacred Pipe" Joseph Epes Brown, "Mother Earth Spirituality" Ed McGaa, and other sources. I only wish Ms. Kehoe had bothered to properly research material instead of making outrageous statements such as this. Please send E-Mail if you have questions or comments about this review.

Two Bears. Wah doh Ogedoda (We give thanks Great Spirit)

Kehoe's excellent work on the Ghost Dance religion allows the reader to be witness to a textbook example of religious revitalization movements. From the Paiute prophet Wovoka Jack Wilson's revelation during an eclipse to "Live a good, honest life" to the massacre at Wounded Knee, Kehoe describes in detail the history and beliefs of the Ghost Dance and the benefits it provided to the American Indian communities who took it up, as well as the rejection of the Ghost Dance religion by groups like the Navajo. Kehoe further describes the continuance of a variant of the Ghost Dance religion at a reservation in Saskatchewan and talks about the revitalization movement driven by Handsome Lake amongst the Iroquois and how the re-imagining of their beliefs allowed them to become more successful in a radically altered world. This rather short read by a pre-eminent author on the anthropology of American Indian societies is sure to both educate and provide deep enjoyment to the curious reader.

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