

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

This study of the 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance movements among North American Indians offers an innovative theory about why these movements arose when they did. Emphasizing the demographic situation of American Indians prior to the movements, Professor Thornton argues that the Ghost Dances were deliberate efforts to accomplish a demographic revitalization of American Indians following their virtual collapse. By joining the movements, he contends, tribes sought to assure survival by increasing their numbers through returning the dead to life.

Thornton supports this thesis empirically by closely examining the historical context of the two movements and by assessing tribal participation in them, revealing particularly how population size and decline influenced participation among and within American Indian tribes. He also considers American Indian population change after the Ghost Dance periods and shows that participation in the movements actually did lead the way to a demographic recovery for certain tribes. This occurred, Thornton argues, not, of course, by returning dead American Indians to life, but by creating enhanced tribal solidarity. This solidarity enabled participating tribes to maintain their membership at a historical point when American Indians were socially and biologically “migrating” away from tribal populations.

As well as being of intrinsic interest, Thornton’s findings have broad implications for the study of revitalization and other social movements. They are particularly important with regard to the circumstances fostering social movements and the rational basis of social movement participation.

Cambridge University Press
 0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
 Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton
 Frontmatter/Prelims
[More information](#)

Other books in the series

- J. Milton Yinger, Kiyoshi Ikeda, Frank Laycock, and Stephen J. Cutler: *Middle Start: An Experiment in the Educational Enrichment of Young Adolescents*
- James A. Geschwender: *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency: The League of Revolutionary Black Workers*
- Paul Ritterband: *Education, Employment, and Migration: Israel in Comparative Perspective*
- John Low-Beer: *Protest and Participation: The New Working Class in Italy*
- Orrin E. Klapp: *Opening and Closing: Strategies of Information Adaptation in Society*
- Rita James Simon: *Continuity and Change: A Study of Two Ethnic Communities in Israel*
- Marshall B. Clinard: *Cities with Little Crime: The Case of Switzerland*
- Steven T. Bossert: *Tasks and Social Relationships in Classrooms: A Study of Instructional Organization and Its Consequences*
- Richard E. Johnson: *Juvenile Delinquency and Its Origins: An Integrated Theoretical Approach*
- David R. Heise: *Understanding Events: Affect and the Construction of Social Action*
- Ida Harper Simpson: *From Student to Nurse: A Longitudinal Study of Socialization*
- Stephen P. Turner: *Sociological Explanation as Translation*
- Janet W. Salaff: *Working Daughters of Hong Kong: Filial Piety or Power in the Family?*
- Joseph Chamie: *Religion and Fertility: Arab Christian–Muslim Differentials*
- William Friedland, Amy Barton, and Robert Thomas: *Manufacturing Green Gold: Capital, Labor, and Technology in the Lettuce Industry*
- Richard N. Adams: *Paradoxical Harvest: Energy and Explanation in British History, 1870–1914*
- Mary F. Rogers: *Sociology, Ethnomethodology, and Experience: A Phenomenological Critique*
- James R. Beniger: *Trafficking in Drug Users: Professional Exchange Networks in the Control of Deviance*
- Jon Miller: *Pathways in the Workplace: The Effects of Race and Gender on Access to Organizational Resources*
- Andrew J. Weigert, J. Smith Teitge, and Dennis Teitge: *Society and Identity: Toward a Sociological Psychology*
- Michael A. Faia: *The Strategy and Tactics of Dynamic Functionalism*
- Joyce Rothschild-Whitt and J. Allen Whitt: *The Cooperative Workplace: Potentials and Dilemmas of Organizational Democracy and Participation*

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

**The Arnold and Caroline Rose Monograph Series
of the American Sociological Association**

We shall live again

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

The Rose Monograph Series was established in 1968 in honor of the distinguished sociologists Arnold and Caroline Rose whose bequest makes the Series possible. The sole criterion for publication in the Series is that a manuscript contribute to knowledge in the discipline of sociology in a systematic and substantial manner. All areas of the discipline and all established and promising modes of inquiry are equally eligible for consideration. The Rose Monograph Series is an official publication of the American Sociological Association.

Editor: Ernest Q. Campbell

Board of Editors

Andrew Cherlin

Robert Hauser

Daniel Chirot

Virginia Hiday

Phillips Cutright

Teresa Sullivan

Kai Erikson

Jonathan Turner

The Editor and Board of Editors gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Thomas D. Hall, University of Oklahoma, as expert reviewer of this manuscript.

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

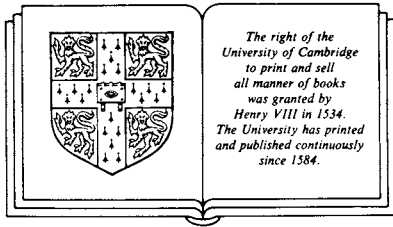
[More information](#)

We shall live again

**The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance
movements as demographic revitalization**

Russell Thornton

University of Minnesota



Cambridge University Press

Cambridge

London New York New Rochelle

Melbourne Sydney

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1986

First published 1986

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Thornton, Russell, 1942–

We shall live again.

(The Arnold and Caroline Rose monograph series of
the American Sociological Association)

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Ghost dance. 2. Indians of North America – West
(U.S.) – Population. 3. Indians of North America – West
(U.S.) – Rites and ceremonies. I. Title. II. Series.
E98.D2T48 1986 304.6'08997078 86–4176

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Thornton, Russell

We shall live again : the 1870 and 1890 Ghost
Dance movements as demographic revitalization. –

(The Arnold and Caroline Rose monograph series
of the American Sociological Association)

1. Ghost dance 2. Demography – North America
3. Indians of North America – Population

I. Title II. Series

299'.7 E98.D2

ISBN 0 521 32894 2

Transferred to digital printing 2004

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

For

all those who danced the Dances

and

To

Russell and Rebecca, who never did

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

My children, when at first I liked the whites,
My children, when at first I liked the whites,
I gave them fruits,
I gave them fruits.

– Arapaho Ghost Dance song

Father, have pity on me,
Father, have pity on me;
I am crying for thirst,
I am crying for thirst;
All is gone – I have nothing to eat,
All is gone – I have nothing to eat.

– Arapaho Ghost Dance song

We shall live again,
We shall live again.

– Comanche Ghost Dance song

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

Contents

Preface	<i>page</i>	xi
Acknowledgments		xiii
1 The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance movements		1
2 Prior scholarship on the Ghost Dance movements		11
3 Hypothesis of demographic revitalization		17
4 Depopulation and the Ghost Dance movements		20
5 Ghost Dance participation and depopulation		28
6 Participation and population recovery		38
7 A summary, a conclusion, some implications		46
Technical Appendixes		
A Contingency tables for Q and χ^2 values		51
B Some considerations of methodology		54
C Tribes of the 1870 Ghost Dance: Ghost Dance participation, distance from origin, and population sizes at various times		64
D Shastan subdivisions of the 1870 Ghost Dance: population sizes in the 1850s and 1870s		70
E Tribes of the 1890 Ghost Dance: Ghost Dance participation, distance from origin, and population sizes at various times		71
F Sioux subdivisions of the 1890 Ghost Dance: population sizes in the 1870s and 1890s		76
G Tribes of the 1870 Ghost Dance: population sizes in the 1890s and 1910s and percentage full-blood in 1910 by age group		77
H Tribes of the 1890 Ghost Dance: population sizes in the 1910s and 1930s and percentage full-blood in 1930 by age group		81
References		85
Index		93

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

Preface

Two social movements arose among American Indian peoples in the latter nineteenth century – the 1870 Ghost Dance and the 1890 Ghost Dance. Each had the same objective: to restore American Indian societies devastated by contact with Europeans. The restorations were to occur through the performance of prescribed dances and were to include the removal of whites from Indian lands; reappearance of animal and plant food supplies, specifically the buffalo; and elimination of disease. They were also to include the return of American Indian dead to life; thus the name ‘Ghost’ Dances.

Each Ghost Dance movement has received a variety of scholarly attention, from descriptions of the performance of actual dances, to cultural, social, even psychological explanations, to empirical research on tribal participation. My work, reported here, examines the conditions that fostered the Ghost Dance movements and tribal participation in them.

In contrast to prior scholarship on these movements, I emphasize the demographic situations of American Indians. My thesis is that the Ghost Dance movements were meant to accomplish a *demographic revitalization*. By joining the movements, tribes might assure their survival by increasing their numbers through returning the dead to life, which was the most fundamental objective of both movements. From this point of view, the Ghost Dances were deliberate attempts to respond to a threatening situation rather than a phenomenon of mass hysteria.

I show, empirically, that the Ghost Dances were attempts at demographic revitalization. I do so by discussing the historical context in which they occurred and by assessing tribal participation in detail and examining how demographic and related considerations influenced it, both among and within American Indian tribes.

I also consider what happened to American Indian tribes after the Ghost Dance periods. For complicated reasons, each of the two movements was eventually successful for participant tribes, and each did lead the way to a demographic revival for them.

Although I limit my research to the 1870 and 1890 American Indian Ghost Dances as demographic revitalizations, it should prove pertinent to the study of

xii *Preface*

other revitalization movements, Indian or non-Indian, in different ways, as well as to the consideration of social movements generally. I hope my work makes a contribution to research and debates of other scholars.

Particularly important in this regard are the circumstances fostering or hindering such movements (see, for example, Jorgensen, 1972; Champagne, 1983; Jenkins, 1983; and Olzak, 1983). My view, presented here and elsewhere (Thornton, 1981, 1982, 1984c), is that basic population changes are important antecedents to the occurrence of social movements. My additional view, also presented here and elsewhere (Thornton, 1984c), is that the demographic changes may be considered threats to the integrity of group boundaries and are met by collective efforts, particularly revitalization movements, to reaffirm dissolving boundaries.

In Chapter 1, I provide a brief, general discussion of the Ghost Dance movements for those unfamiliar with them. Chapter 2 is a consideration of previous scholarship examining the movements; there I discuss various ways the movements have been discussed and researched.

Chapter 3 sets forth my basic view of the Ghost Dances as demographic revitalization and the general hypothesis guiding my research. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the general historic context in which the movements occurred and is the initial test of my hypothesis.

In Chapter 5, I examine both inter- and intratribal differences in Ghost Dance participation, relating both to selected demographic, demographic-type, and associated variables. Chapter 6 presents an assessment of the post-Ghost Dance population recovery of the tribes in question, by relating tribal differences in participation to subsequent population changes and maintenance of full-blood tribal populations.

A final chapter offers a summary and a conclusion, along with some implications of my view of the Ghost Dances and my empirical findings.

Appendix A presents in a single form the contingency tables used in my statistical analysis; Appendix B is a detailed statement of methodological considerations underlying the data of this analysis; and Appendixes C through H contain the basic data themselves.

Cambridge University Press

0521328942 - We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as
Demographic Revitalization - Russell Thornton

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

Portions of this work have been published previously in Thornton (1981, 1982). The present work is both an elaboration and an extension of these publications.

I have made oral presentations of various parts of the work on two occasions at the D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian of the Newberry Library (Chicago) and on single occasions at the Departments of Sociology of UCLA and the Florida State University, at the Population Research Laboratory of the University of Southern California, at the National Institute of Mental Health, and at the 1984 meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory. I thank more colleagues than I am able to recall for comments at these presentations.

The encouragement of Tony Paredes in the Department of Anthropology at Florida State University was very helpful in the early stages of this research. He was kind enough to read an early draft of the entire manuscript. Ron Aminzade in the Department of Sociology at the University of Minnesota provided freely his knowledge of social movements and commented on the final chapter.

Reviewers of earlier drafts of the manuscript additionally provided very insightful and thus very helpful critiques. I am much indebted to them for their anonymous efforts. I am also much indebted to Ernest Campbell in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Vanderbilt University, editor of the Rose Monograph Series, for nonanonymous comments.

Gloria DeWolfe, Joanne Losinski, and Mary Ann Beneke, of the supportive staffs of the Department of Sociology and the Family Study Center of the University of Minnesota, spent hours at typewriters and word processors preparing versions of the manuscript. Gloria DeWolfe deserves particular praise in this regard. Thank you, Gloria!

I recognize the editorial skills of Martha Roth, now the managing editor of *Contemporary Sociology*, who did wonders for an early version of the manuscript.

Finally, the research was conducted under the auspices of a Research Scientist Career Development Award from the National Institute of Mental Health (No. 5-K01-MH00256). The support is much appreciated.