

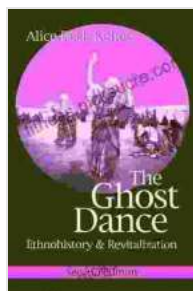
# The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory and Revitalization

The Ghost Dance was a religious movement that spread across Native American tribes in the late 19th century. It promised a return to traditional ways of life and the restoration of buffalo herds that had been decimated by westward expansion. The movement culminated in a series of violent confrontations with the U.S. Army, including the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890.

## Origins and Beliefs

The Ghost Dance originated among the Paiute people of Nevada in 1889. It was led by a young shaman named Wovoka, who claimed to have received visions from the Great Spirit. Wovoka taught that a new world was coming, in which the dead would be resurrected, the buffalo would return, and the white people would be vanquished.

The Ghost Dance quickly spread to other tribes in the Great Plains, including the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa. Each tribe adapted the dance to its own beliefs and practices. For example, the Sioux believed that the Ghost Dance would make them invulnerable to bullets, while the Arapaho believed that it would bring back the dead.



## The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory and Revitalization

by Alice Beck Kehoe

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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## **Spread and Impact**

The Ghost Dance movement spread rapidly through the Great Plains, as Native Americans sought a way to cope with the loss of their traditional lands and way of life. The movement gave them a sense of hope and unity, and it helped to revive traditional religious practices.

The Ghost Dance also had a significant impact on white settlers and the U.S. government. White settlers were alarmed by the movement, and they feared that it would lead to a Native American uprising. The U.S. government banned the Ghost Dance and sent troops to suppress it.

## **The Wounded Knee Massacre**

In December 1890, the U.S. Army massacred over 300 Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota. The massacre was the culmination of a series of confrontations between the army and Native American Ghost Dancers.

The Wounded Knee Massacre was a turning point in the Ghost Dance movement. It marked the end of the movement's hopes for a peaceful return to traditional ways of life. The massacre also led to a loss of faith in the U.S. government and a sense of betrayal among Native Americans.

## **Legacy**

The Ghost Dance movement was a complex and controversial event in American history. It was a response to the loss of land and culture, and it gave Native Americans a sense of hope and unity. The movement also led

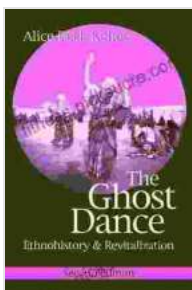
to a violent confrontation with the U.S. Army, and it ultimately failed to achieve its goals.

The Ghost Dance, however, remains an important part of Native American history. It is a reminder of the struggles that Native Americans have faced, and it is a testament to their resilience and their ability to adapt and survive.

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