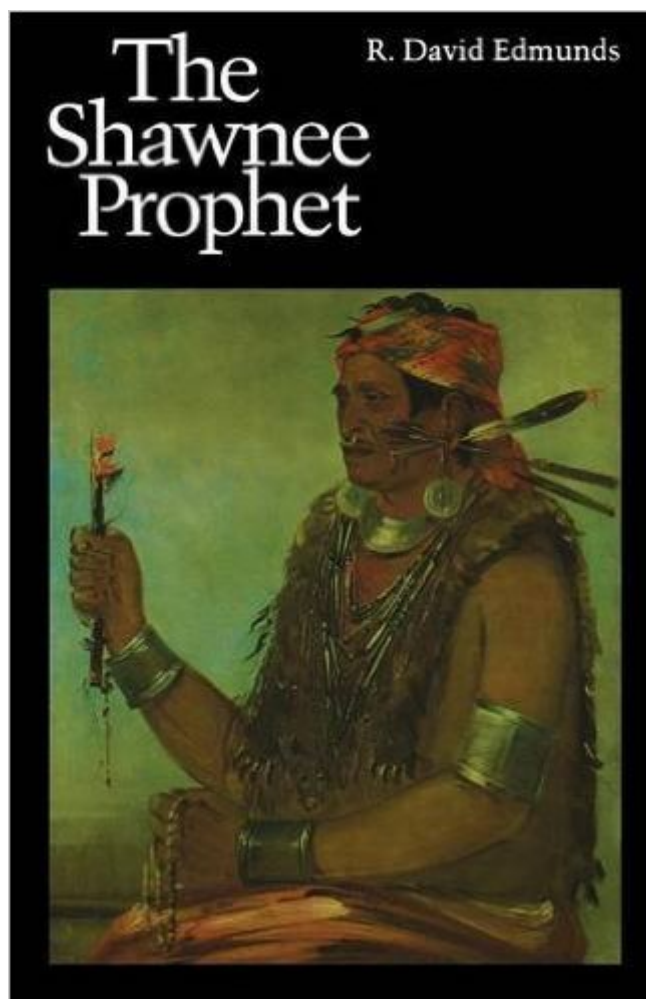


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The Shawnee Prophet



Synopsis

In the early 1800s, when control of the Old Northwest had not yet been assured to the United States, the Shawnee leaders Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa, the Shawnee Prophet, led an intertribal movement culminating at the Battle of Tippecanoe and the Battle of the Thames. Historians have portrayed Tecumseh, the war leader, as the key figure in forging the intertribal confederacy. In this full-length biography of Tenskwatawa, R. David Edmunds shows that, to the contrary, the Shawnee Prophet initiated and for much of the period dominated the movement, providing a set of religious beliefs and ceremonies that revived the tribes' fading power and cohesion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This biography of Tenskwatawa is the only work devoted to the role and importance of the influential Shawnee Prophet who has long been eclipsed in both popular and scholarly works by his far more famous brother, Tecumseh. Born in 1775 in Ohio, Tenskwatawa was one of three triplets born into the family of the Shawnee war chief Puckeshinwa. After surviving a less than ideal childhood and losing an eye in the process, Tenskwatawa soon found himself an outcast among his own tribe. Following the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, he and his people are forced to give up their claims to most of the Ohio Country and many, including himself, fall victim to alcoholism and despair. But after experiencing a vision he believes is sent by the Master of Life, Tenskwatawa is reborn as the Shawnee Prophet and begins to preach a return to the old ways and to reject the ways of the whites whom he says have corrupted and destroyed the Indians. His religious revival

brings together many thousands of loyal followers from many tribes across the Old Northwest and becomes the core of the pan-Indian confederacy engineered by his older brother Tecumseh who intends to push the Americans back east of the Appalachian Mountains and reclaim their ancestral homelands. Tragically, these dreams are crushed by William Henry Harrison's victory over Tenskwata's forces at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. Though Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa would continue to fight alongside the British in the War of 1812, the Prophet's reputation is devastated forever, as is the dream of uniting the tribes and driving the whites from their lands. This is a fascinating book that covers much information not only about the Prophet, but his people and their history, as well as shedding much light on one of the primary causes of the War of 1812 and the Indians' role in that conflict.

Although there are a number of well researched accounts of Indian Chiefs and tribes, there are as many if not more books and articles written on them that have their base on hear-say and downright wrong information. I have spent a number of years reading about Tenskwatawa, the Shawnee Prophet, and Tecumseh, his more famous brother and have been further confused from one source to the other. Which was more true? Until this book 'The Shawnee Prophet' by R. David Edmunds came along, I was about to give up; thinking there couldn't possibly be a correct account. Mr Edmunds bothers to further authenticate his findings with numerous pages of references (about a fourth of the book's volume). The reading format was heavy at first but soon, because of the welcomed amount of information, it quickly became relevant and fascinating to read. By all means do read this book. More books like this need to be written. We need to know the truth about our history.

While there are many books about the life and times of Tecumseh, there is much less on his brother, The Prophet. The reason why it is so important to understand more about the Shawnee Prophet is because his understandings influenced the relationships between the Native in the lower Great Lakes and the United States federal government. As the last major resistance in the region, the Prophet wielded considerable influence in the relationship between the United States and Native peoples. The readers of this book will walk away with a new appreciation.

The author uses many sources and many factual accounts of the events of the early 19th century in the area of the Old Northwest, present day Ohio Valley region. He shows that Tenskwatawa, also known as the Shawnee Prophet, was a proud man who would do anything to maintain his followers. It gives us a great insight into the difficult relations between the Americans and the Native

Americans. The reading is fairly easy and the events described were very interesting. It was a very in-depth look into the life of the Shawnee Prophet, his followers and how they dealt with the world of change swirling around them and the culture clash that existed between the Native Americans and the white settlers moving in. If you are interested in learning more about Native American culture, especially the Shawnee, then I would strongly recommend this book.

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