

BOOK REVIEW

Peyote Religion: A History. Omer C. Stewart. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987. Pp. xvii, 454. \$29.95.

There has been a vast literature published on peyote. Only a few of the items have gone even superficially into the history of the growing religious use among American Indians of the peyote cactus (*Lophophora williamsii*). Stewart, a student of the religious use of peyote for half a century, offers us for the first time a thorough historical evaluation of the rapid spread north of the Mexican border of this native cult. He not only considers the history of the use of the cactus in North America north of its normal distribution (mostly in Mexico and Texas), but he examines the efforts of some of the backward states of the west and southwest to legislate against the Indians' right to utilize this non-addictive and physically more or less harmless hallucinogenic plant in their worship services.

The book is readable, yet thorough. It is based not only on Stewart's personal studies of the peyote cult but on many unpublished and obscure documents relative to various aspects of the history of the sacramental Indian use of the plant. It is a book that every scientist interested in plants or phytochemicals, as well as sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and others, should read.

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