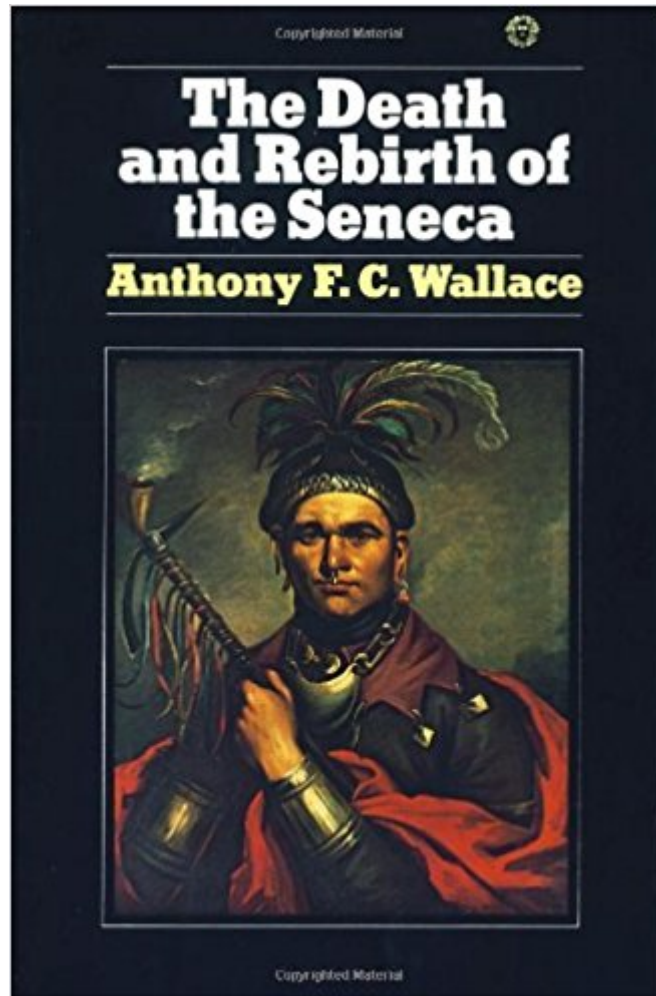




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The Death And Rebirth Of The Seneca



Synopsis

This book tells the story of the late colonial and early reservation history of the Seneca Indians, and of the prophet Handsome Lake, his visions, and the moral and religious revitalization of an American Indian society that he and his followers achieved in the years around 1800. "Here is a carefully crafted masterpiece of anthropological and historical investigation. It is about both the specific renaissance of the Seneca and the possible renaissance of any people. On its specific subject matter, it will probably remain the definitive study for a long time." "Christian Science Monitor" "Until this volume, there has been no single book written that relates the history and life style of one of the Iroquois peoples with the encompassing depth and breadth of knowledge, clarity, and interest that the subject deserves. Finally, this book does it for the Seneca. It is enthralling history, told in a knowledgeable, highly readable way." "Alvin M. Joseph Jr., author of The Indian Heritage of America" "This book is at once troubling and richly textured; for it draws skillfully and impartially on the resources of history, ethnology and psychology to chronicle the agony and decline of one of the proudest of American Indian peoples." "Morris Opler

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Customer Reviews

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This book is a detailed, well-researched record of the Iroquois culture, providing the reader with the necessary context to understand the importance and effects of Handsome Lake's teachings. The examples Wallace provides to illustrate his points are relevant and interesting, and allow the reader to empathize and relate to the Iroquois, and the Seneca in particular. Finally, his analysis is fair. He neither romanticizes nor demonizes, but allows the different groups that appear in his study to be people. I would recommend the first part alone to anyone remotely curious about this culture. It is easy to see why this book has a perennial presence on college syllabi some 50 years on.

Incredible detail on tribal life of the Seneca Nation/Iroquois Nation.

A gift for a young man of Seneca heritage. He enjoyed it very much.

no problems

Great book, held my interest from beginning to end. Anthony Wallace did his research and it shows throughout the book. Easy to read and understand the culture of the Seneca.

Just now getting into it, but it looks very interesting, and sure to solve my curiosity. Glad to have it.

Wallace brings a psychological perspective as well as an anthropological one to Seneca history and particularly their culture. The Seneca are well known for keeping their culture alive, mostly by persistence but also by addition. Their Longhouse Religion, incorporating much of the teachings of

Handsome Lake, is the best example of how they borrowed, but mostly adapted, from the dominant culture to continue a way of life that is distinctly "Indian" and promises to be "Seneca" and "Indian" into the indefinite future. The work will bring almost all aspects of Iroquois life alive for the beginning student of Indians or Iroquois. It is also an excellent reference source on the Seneca and revitalization movements for the professional. ernestschusky.com

This book can be read several ways-- as a chronicle of the American Revolution from the Native American point of view, as escapist literature glorifying the Iroquois in their heyday, as a rather challenging alternative perspective on serial monogamy, torture, and social norms, as the transformation of a branch of Native American spirituality into a movement for sobriety, right-to-life, and the renunciation of witchcraft, as analysis of an early Quaker effort in Third World development work ... And naturally, the overall reading is as the tale of how a proud culture pulled itself back together after being overrun and almost destroyed as a consequence of European settlement. Our local Heinz Regional History Museum somehow manages to overlook the story about the origins of the Handsome Lake spiritual movement. It so happened that there was a bend in the river, where now stands the Kinzua Dam, a flat spot surrounded by steep hills and cliffs, where the Cornplanter band, the largest remaining band of free living Senecas, took refuge after the Revolutionary War. The Senecas had served as winning warriors for the losing side, and as a result, refugee camps up near Fort Niagara filled up with thousands of Indians in need of British relief, mourning their burned-out towns and villages. In the ensuing atmosphere of despair, Handsome Lake and some of his Cornplanter band buddies decided to bring a raft with plenty of liquor up the river from Pittsburgh. The party that followed was-- well, let's just say that the repentance occurring in the wake of that rave gone awry launched a spiritual movement which continues to this day. The author's synthesis of the tremendous amount of material buried in regional historical records is truly amazing. Even if the life of the Senecas wasn't really that way at all, it may not matter. There's nothing like a great story which will continue to shatter its readers' preconceptions about cultural norms and human potential for many years to come.

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