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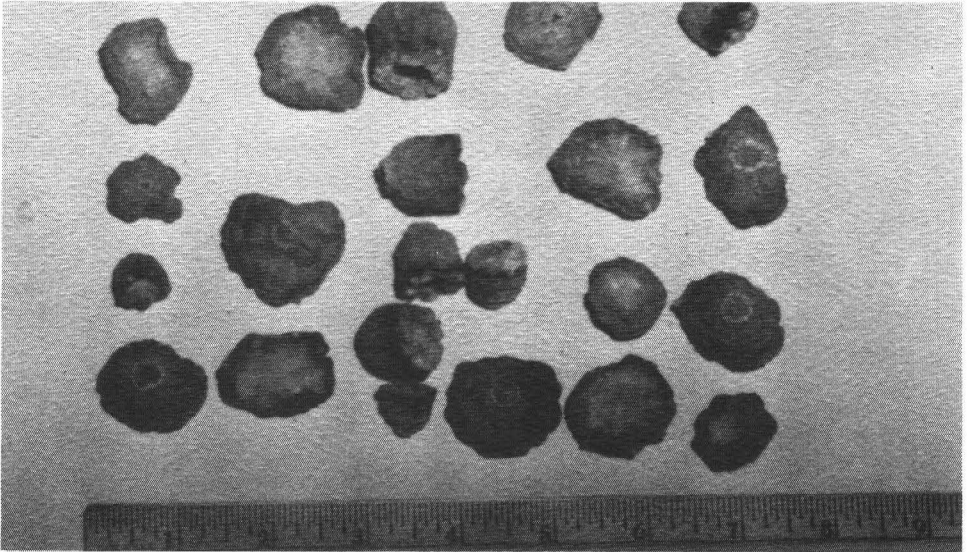
The History of Peyotism in Nevada

OMER C. STEWART

USING ONLY THE TRADITIONAL methods of history, which heavily depend on published or unpublished written records, or ethnography, which rely on data collected by interviews with native informants and knowledge obtained by participant observation, would leave a very incomplete and distorted picture of Peyotism in Nevada. Notwithstanding the fact that Peyotists have always been a small minority in the total Nevada Indian population, they have become known world-wide and provide examples of a number of the peculiar circumstances connected with the whole history of the Peyote religion in the New World. Involved in that history is the nature of the unusual, small, spineless cactus called by the Aztecs *Peyotl*, Peyote by the Spanish, Mexicans and Indians in the area of its abundant growth along the Rio Grande in south Texas and northern Mexico, and by botanists named *Lophophora williamsii* (Lemaire) *Coulter*. Also important is the strong American tradition whereby some citizens try to legislate against behavior of which they disapprove, exemplified by the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which prohibited use of alcohol. The history of Peyotism in Nevada is incomprehensible if not placed in the national context.

In October of 1937 I learned of the presence of the Peyote religion in Nevada during a conversation with Washoes Ben Lancaster and Sam Dick, following our participation in a Peyote meeting in Randlett, Utah, on the Uintah and Ouray Ute reservation. It was known by officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) that Lancaster had started to hold Peyote ceremonies among the Washo in October 1936, only a few months after my first ethnographic research in the area. I did my field research for a Ph.D. thesis in the fall of 1938.

My ethnohistorical studies in recent years allow me to reconstruct an outline of the history of Peyote in Nevada before the return of Lancaster as a Peyote proselytizer. Christian missionaries and BIA officials announced their opposition to Peyotism when it was first discovered in Oklahoma in 1886, and they continued that opposition actively until John Collier became Indian commissioner in 1933. Until Collier, the BIA and missionary societies both collected data on Peyotism and disseminated reports throughout Indian country to combat it. The process



Peyote buttons (*Omer Stewart*)

of data collection itself spread knowledge. For example, the earliest documents on Peyote in Nevada were copies of three letters sent to BIA agents in Stewart, Fallon and Owyhee in 1916. These I found in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The tone of the inquiry suggests danger and opposition. For example, "Please let me have a report from you immediately, giving the number of Indians addicted to its use, and the extent and frequency of its use. Who are the leaders? Where do they get their supply from, and how? What is the effect on the users as shown by your own observations and from reports of employees, missionaries, and others . . . What is physical condition of users . . ." The letter was signed Chief Special Officer, i.e. detective, of the BIA.

The next reference to Peyote in Nevada is the state statute regulating the Sale and Use of Poison, Section 5082, paragraph 8, which added "anhalonium (peyote or mescal button)" in February 1917 as a substance prohibited except on prescription. I have found only one hint of local Nevada influence to bring about that anti-Peyote amendment. In a 1922 letter from the agent of a Crow reservation to the BIA during his campaign to have an anti-Peyote law passed in Montana, Agent C. H. Asbury wrote to the Commissioner: "I had something to do with getting special legislation against the use of certain drugs in Nevada and I found no particular difficulty in having the proper words inserted in the law." Asbury had been the Indian Agent at the Duck Valley reservation for a number of years until transferred in the fall of 1916. National forces against Peyote may have been important in Nevada at that time, as they

were in Utah and Colorado where Peyote was outlawed also in February 1917.

The next mention of Peyote in Nevada is in a report of Special Agent Dorrington dated May 12-13, 1917. Surprisingly, it refers to Jack Wilson, the Messiah and originator of the Ghost Dance of the 1890s. Wrote Dorrington:

Use of peyote and mescal. There is absolutely no evidence indicating that either peyote or mescal is used on the reservations or that the Indians know anything about it . . . Jack Wilson resides in Mason Valley . . . He is the 'Messiah' and the originator of the 'Ghost Dance'. He appears to attract but little attention from Indians in this locality but apparently has considerable influence among distant tribes and he seemingly keeps in close touch with them; that he is corresponding with certain individuals in Montana, South Dakota, Wyoming and Oklahoma . . . It is further learned that even delegations have paid him a visit . . . He is also known as a 'medicine man' and practices some among his people, but most of his time is believed to be spent visiting the distant and more prosperous tribes and individuals from whom he procures large sums of money . . . Jack Wilson is a very dignified and striking Indian . . . From all accounts he has always been friendly with whites . . . A recent picture of Jack, taken by myself, is attached. It cost me the sum of one dollar, that is, Jack made a 'touch' for that amount after the picture had been taken . . . After careful inquiry I am satisfied that Jack Wilson does not use peyote or mescal, nor has he encouraged its use by others . . . he is very temperate in his habits . . . he is constantly advising the Indians to abstain from the use of all drugs and intoxicants."

The next important BIA document prepared and widely disseminated nationwide was shown to me by missionaries and officials when I was studying Washo-Northern Paiute Peyotism in 1938. It was a thirty-eight page pamphlet prepared by Dr. Robert E. L. Newberne, *Peyote, An Abridged Compilation from the Files of the Bureau of Indian Affairs*, published in 1922. Newberne summarized historical information on Peyote starting with Spanish padres, and presented anti-Peyote reports of American missionaries to the Indians. He included samples of data collected in 1919 by means of a twenty-one item questionnaire sent to Indian service employees such as agents, physicians, farmers, field matrons, directors of Indian schools and sectarian missionaries. Three hundred and two answers were received in Washington, D.C. from 116 Indian agencies, for which 87, including 6 located in Nevada, reported no use of Peyote. The Nevada Indian population was listed at 10,854 and included no known Peyotists.

From interviews with Indians in 1938 I learned of a Sioux Indian Peyote missionary, named Sam Lone Bear. Lone Bear had been proselytizing since 1914 in Utah, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. He

conducted Peyote rituals at Fallon and Pyramid Lake during several months in the summer of 1929. His success at "doctoring" attracted participants to his Peyote meeting at Nixon, Nevada, from as far away as McDermitt, Nevada, and Bishop, California. Lone Bear made his headquarters with Joe Green, a well-known and respected Paiute medicineman residing on the Pyramid Lake Reservation. In 1938 Joe told me of his conversion to Peyotism notwithstanding his being an active and convinced Episcopalian, and also a practicing shaman. He had no difficulties being simultaneously a leader in three religions, a situation I have found repeatedly among Indian Peyotists.

In 1929 Sam Lone Bear used the name Leo Old Coyote (which I heard as Leo O'Kio) in Nevada because he was trying to avoid being arrested under a federal warrant for violation of the Mann Act. He was arrested in 1932, tried, and sentenced to three years in the federal prison at McNeil Island, Washington, but was paroled in two years. On his way home he stopped at Fallon, Nevada, and courted Mamie Charley, the sister of a Shoshone he had converted in 1929. Sam and Mamie were married in South Dakota and lived on Sam's allotment on Lone Bear Creek, Pine Ridge Reservation, until he died on February 5, 1937.

No Nevada Indians learned how to obtain Peyote or acquired the equipment and knowledge to conduct Peyote ceremonies from Sam Lone Bear. Consequently no Peyote meetings were held in western Nevada until about 1932 when a Ute Peyotist named Ralph Kochamp-anaskin, usually called Raymond Lone Bear, married a Washo and settled in Minden. One of his followers was Sam Dick, an active old-fashioned Washo medicine man. After an initial success, Ralph lost his following because he failed to live up to the non-drinking rule of the Peyote religion.

During my interviewing in the fall of 1938 at the Indian School near Carson City a woman from Owyhee, Nevada, told me that Peyotism was introduced to the Duck Valley Reservation from Fort Hall, Idaho, years before, but she could give me no details. Later I found a 1939 letter from Owyhee in which the Indian Agent reported that members of the tribal council agreed Peyote was first used during a curing ceremony at Duck Valley in 1915. During my first field work in Fallon in 1936, my Northern Paiute interpreter praised the Peyote religion; I learned in 1938 that he had been converted during a visit to Fort Hall in 1920. Since then he had traveled regularly to other states to attend Peyote meetings but had not introduced the ceremonies to his people in Nevada.

Jim Street, a Shoshone living in Fallon, told me in 1938 that he had been converted to Peyotism on the Goshute reservation at Ibapah, Utah, in 1932, but had not attended any more Peyote rituals until shortly before I interviewed him.

It is evident that the Indians of Nevada had gained considerable experience and heard many rumors about Peyote before Ben Lancaster firmly established the religion among the Washo and Paiute of western Nevada. It is Lancaster's ceremony which attracted the support of about 300 of the 2257 Indians in the area. It is now appropriate to describe the Peyote ritual of Lancaster and to summarize some of his teachings. It should be said at the outset that the Washo-Northern Paiute rituals I observed in 1938 were nearly identical to the rituals I had seen among the Ute a year earlier; these Ute rituals closely paralleled ones observed by anthropologists in Oklahoma and elsewhere who supplied me information for a 265 item comparative table published as part of my thesis.

A canvas tipi is the most desirable place to conduct the Peyote ritual, but I attended services with the Washo and Paiute in a canvas walled "corral" and at regular residences. Before the participants assemble, a sand crescent altar about four inches high and four feet long is constructed on the west side of the meeting place. A fire is laid on a protective mound or on the ground east of the altar. At dusk the congregation meets at the entrance on the east side of the structure where the leader, called the roadman, prays to Jesus, God, Mary and Peyote for guidance during the ritual and for health and wisdom throughout life. When the devotees enter, they always move clockwise to find seats. They follow the same pattern whenever leaving or entering. Four officials direct the ceremony — the roadman, chief drummer, and cedarman, who are seated on blankets on the ground west of the altar, and the fireman or doorman just inside the entrance. The normal equipment consists of a water drum, bird-tail feather fans, gourd rattles, a staff, dried Peyote, or Peyote tea, Bull Durham tobacco, and a large-size Peyote button to place on the altar. The equipment is incensed in cedar smoke at the beginning. After all pray through Bull Durham cigarette smoke, the roadman passes clockwise the sack of Peyote buttons. Each adult participant takes four buttons, the ceremonial number, to prayerfully eat. Then the roadman kneels and holds the three-foot staff and a fan in his left hand. He shakes the rattle and sings four hymns, in which he is accompanied by the chief drummer. Each male participant in turn receives the paraphernalia, and sings while accompanied on the drum by his neighbor to the right. The singing, drumming and praying continue until dawn except for a midnight recess

and water drinking. At dawn, a ceremonial meal of water, fruit, meat, and maize is blessed and passed clockwise; all present take four spoonfuls of the food and four sips of the water. The water from the dismantled drum is poured on the sand altar and the ceremony ends. Women of the congregation prepare a banquet, which is usually eaten about noon, and then members return to their homes.

With the Peyote plant, dried with the appearance of home dried peaches, Nevada Indians acquired beliefs and attitudes about the bitter-tasting cactus which have been associated with it since they were recorded by early Spanish explorers in Mexico in the 1500s. Peyote itself is sacred, they emphasize, and has many powers to help mankind. It is also a messenger to supernatural powers, now usually named God and Jesus. When eaten and prayed to in the proper ritual context, Peyote helps cure all diseases and reveals many things: the location of lost objects or persons, future events, and proper behavior, among others. Peyote protects from the evil intentions of witches. It brings knowledge for proper living, which includes avoiding alcoholic beverages and always acting according to strict Christian ethics — to love your wife and children and kin, be patriotic and law abiding, and to respect authority, God and elders.

When asked why they supported the Peyote religion, devotees cited the success of Peyotists in curing. In tracing the history of Peyotism in Nevada from the mid 1930s to the mid 1970s, one discovers the interplay of a number of individuals, first the Indians and BIA officials, then state and local authorities and the general public. From the public emerged a few citizens who actively opposed Peyotism and some who defended it. Christian missionaries and their supporters disputed with Peyote religion sympathizers, such as anthropologists and members of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Lancaster and his rituals soon came under opposition by both civil and religious authorities, but of course an awareness of Peyotism and opposition to it was present in Nevada when it was prohibited by law in 1917. Alida C. Bowler, Superintendent of the Carson Indian Agency, reported to the BIA that she was suspicious that Lancaster was a dope peddler. About three months later, the Reverend S. R. Dunlop, a Baptist missionary to the Washo, reported that Lancaster, in order to defend himself and Peyotism, was saying that Commissioner John Collier's son Donald had participated in Peyote rituals. (Donald Collier had attended a Peyote meeting with the Kiowa in 1935.) Bowler maintained her suspicions until she left the Nevada Indian Service at the end of 1939. For three years, BIA detectives kept an intermittent watch on Lancaster, and his car was searched several times as he passed the Nevada-



Sam Dick and Peyote devotees following all-night Peyote meeting. Mono Lake, California, July 1938. (*Omer Stewart*)



Around the Peyote altar at the end of a Peyote meeting, Mono Lake, 1938. After the midnight recess, all members took their individual fans and gourd rattles and shook them in unison with the leader of a hymn. (*Omer Stewart*)

California state line. Samples of materials in his car were chemically analysed for Bowler and instead of the morphine she suspected, Lancaster was transporting ground Peyote and sagebrush.

A number of Indians reacted to the Peyote religion as Joe Green did, that is by adding it to their lives but still maintaining the Christian denomination they followed, and continuing to call on Indian medicine men from time to time. The majority of the Indians rejected Peyotism, however. In April a delegation of Washo presented a petition to Bowler requesting that Peyote meetings be stopped. The Indian opponents used the same arguments as the whites -- "Peyote kills" -- while converts said "Peyote saves."

While organizing the data I accumulated at the Carson Indian Agency and trying to acquire a firmer basis to judge Miss Bowler's opinion that Ben Lancaster was not a proper Peyotist, I wrote to Mack Haag, President of the Native American Church (NAC), a Cheyenne residing in Calumet, Oklahoma. He replied that he knew Lancaster well and that "he is well qualified" to start Peyote meetings in Nevada.

Inasmuch as the BIA in Washington in 1937 successfully opposed an attempt to enact a national Peyote prohibition, and replaced the anti-Peyote pamphlet by Newberne (published in 1922) with a mimeographed report favorable to Peyote entitled "Documents on Peyote," a new and widely publicized campaign against the NAC which developed in Nevada in 1940 is surprising. Accounts of these efforts, which resembled some of those used in 1937 and 1938 which I evaluated in my Ph.D. thesis, were recovered from the National Archives. Newspaper reports from Nevada dated May 1940 contained opinions that several deaths had occurred because Indians took Peyote in Lancaster's rituals. The coroners' verdicts were that the deceased suffered from advanced stages of tuberculosis before they attended the NAC ceremonies.

Opponents were not convinced and had reinserted into Nevada's narcotics law a prohibition against Peyote in February 1941. Under provisions of the amended law, Lancaster was arrested in Reno in October 1941. A full account of his arrest and the people who brought it about appeared in a half-page article in, surprisingly, the *New York Sunday News* of November 30, 1941. The item, "special to the News", included a photograph of Ben Lancaster and one of Dr. Charles Lee Tranter, a neurologist, with the caption "Tranter. . . and Malcolm Easterlin, attorney, who are leading movement to outlaw use of peyote, 'Sacred mushroom of the Aztecs', among Indians of the West, asserting addiction is spreading." The article outlined a campaign against Peyote very reminiscent of those which took place from 1914 to 1937 to support bills introduced in Congress to prohibit Peyote. The *News* article reported:

Lancaster's arrest came at the end of a long investigation. The official finger was put on him by the Rev. Samuel R. Dunlop. . . . Baptist missionary. . . . The Rev. Dunlop has been in Nevada since 1935, having come from Wisconsin where he administered to the Winnebago, who also used peyote. . . .

While he [Lancaster] was gathering a congregation around him, the whites were observing with more and more alarm the growing use of peyote. Chief among these were Dr. Charles Lee Tranter. . . . who heads the Association for Prevention of Peyotism, and Malcolm Easterlin, New York and Washington attorney. Also active is Representative Frances Bolton (R-Ohio), who is a member of the Indian Affairs Committee. . . .

The article stated that Commissioner Collier had said that Peyote as used in Indian ceremonies is not habit forming and not harmful.

Also in 1941 an article appeared in *Scribner's Commentator* (Vol. 11, pp. 77-82) with the title "Peyote -- Indian Problem No. 1," by Malcolm Easterlin. It started with a disparaging evaluation of Commissioner Collier and then presented a short history of Peyote; it faulted him for opposing the anti-Peyote legislation. Easterlin conveyed the impression that only Collier had opposed laws to prohibit Peyote, whereas while he was in office he worked against only one bill to outlaw Peyote. Eight earlier similar bills had been sponsored by the BIA from 1916 to 1926 but were rejected by Congress. Easterlin praised Dr. Tranter and accused Ben Lancaster of doping Indians in order to get all of their money.

On March 17, 1942, Judge William McKnight dismissed the charges against Lancaster on a legal technicality -- the 1941 legislature had voted to amend a "repealed and non-existing former act." But that did not stop Tranter, who was joined by Dr. Walter Bromberg, a psychiatrist who had worked for the New York Criminal Courts until he moved to Reno in December 1941. In June 1942 Bromberg and Tranter presented a paper to the Western Regional Conference of the Home Mission Council of North America during its meeting at the Indian School in Stewart, Nevada. Data presented came from earlier publications, yet the paper was published in *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* (Vol. 97, pp. 518-527), under the title "Peyote intoxication: Some psychological aspects of the Peyote rite." The article was condensed and distributed at five cents a copy by the National Fellowship of Indian Workers and was published in a letter of August 6, 1943. An article less blatantly critical of Peyotism by Bromberg appeared in *Nature Magazine*, October 1942, entitled "Storm Over Peyote."

A really scurrilous article, containing many inaccuracies, written by Charles L. Tranter, M.D., under the title "Peyote -- New Dope Menace," appeared in the national scandal-mongering magazine *PIC*, on December 8, 1942. Included were pictures of old Indian women said to be

under the influence of Peyote, but who actually were known to never use Peyote. Representative Frances Bolton inserted the article in a hearing of the Committee on Indian Affairs and it was printed by the government without the photographs in December 1944. Nothing more by or about the leaders of the 1941-1942 campaign against Peyote in Nevada has come to my attention. Except for a few news items over the years reporting that NAC members had successfully opposed new bills submitted to the Nevada legislature to outlaw Peyote, since 1944 nearly all information on the subject coming from Nevada has originated in anthropological research.

Publications by anthropologists began in 1940 with the notice by Jack Harris about the Shoshone at Duck Valley which is mentioned above, and the appearance in the *Proceedings* of the Sixth Pacific Science Congress, in which I published a short paper. This was the first report on Ben Lancaster in a publication distributed internationally. My Ph.D. thesis was issued in print in January 1944, and a review appeared in the *American Anthropologist* in 1946.

In 1954 Warren d'Azevedo began research among the Washo and was soon invited to participate in a Peyote meeting held by Ramsey Walker at Woodfords, California. He produced several unpublished reports before he and musicologist Alan P. Merriam published an article in the *American Anthropologist* (1957, Vol. 59, pp. 615-641) entitled "Washo Peyote Songs." (In 1976, I discovered a listing in a *Schwann Guide to Tapes and Records* an album by the same title issued as No. 4384, by Folkway Records. I have not been able to ascertain if the two are related. A Northern Paiute originally from McDermitt, Wilbur Jack, recorded Peyote songs on Canyon Records, ARP 6054.) Other anthropologists who have written on Washo Peyotism are James Downs and John A. Price; d'Azevedo attempted to promote a general public understanding of Peyotism with a long article in the *Native Nevadan*, September 3, 1968, entitled "Peyote: Fact and Fancy."

Until his death in 1953, Ben Lancaster made annual pilgrimages to Oilton, Texas, to collect and dry a year's supply of Peyote. By not furnishing Peyote to others he strengthened his own role as leader. As early as 1939, I assisted some other Indians in receiving Peyote by mail, but because the State of Nevada had passed a law against the transportation of Peyote, commercial suppliers could not send it by U.S. Mail into the state. Others began traveling to Texas and making arrangements with Indians in Oklahoma to transship packages of the sacred cactus.

Lancaster had been active with officials of the NAC before becoming a Peyote proselytizer in Nevada in 1936; and although the NAC organization has never attempted to control or direct Peyotist mission-

aries, it did attempt to intercede in his behalf with the BIA when he was being harassed by Dr. Tranter in 1941.

Copies of large quantities of official NAC correspondence came into my possession from the estate of Sidney Slotkin after his death in 1958. From letters in that file a clear record emerges that others began communicating with the NAC by 1954. That year Harry Sam of Smith, Nevada, and Burton John of Gardnerville sent word to the president of the NAC that they would attend a regional meeting at Fort Hall.

By 1955 and 1956, as shown in the Bulletin of the NAC edited by anthropologist Slotkin in Chicago, and by other documents from the Slotkin file, Washo and Northern Paiute Peyotists numbered about sixty in and near Gardnerville. Louise Lancaster, the widow of Ben, was one of the leaders and in 1955 contributed \$115 to the international organization of the NAC. Her financial support probably stimulated the international officials to appoint her the "Regional Representative of NAC for Nevada and California" at the 1955 annual convention.

Reubin Hardin of McDermitt wrote to Slotkin in 1956 to subscribe to the NAC Bulletin, and in 1958 Hardin was put forward as a leading Peyotist in Nevada by Peyotists in Idaho. Reubin Hardin was named a "Delegate-at-Large" by NAC officials when he was present at the annual convention of the Peyote Church during its 1978 meeting in Laredo, Texas.

The participation of Nevada Indians in the international affairs of the NAC brought Vice-President Frank Takes Gun to the state in 1958 so that local people would incorporate the NAC of Nevada under the laws of the state. This was completed on May 20, 1958 with Washo, Paiute and Shoshone signing as incorporators with Crow Indian Takes Gun.

In 1972, I had an opportunity to again talk with Peyotists on the Goshute Reservation, and in Duck Valley, Pyramid Lake, Fallon, Gardnerville, Elko and McDermitt. At McDermitt I was allowed to be a participant-observer in a Peyote meeting conducted by Grover Tom.

It was remarkable that a number of circumstances I had discovered present among Peyotists in other states were duplicated in Nevada. Several were exemplified by Grover Tom, roadman at McDermitt. First was the surprise I felt that he was a leader of Peyotism for the Paiute at McDermitt, yet he was a Shoshone who learned to speak Paiute after he married a McDermitt Paiute woman in 1950. He was thus an alien Peyote preacher to those Paiute. Grover Tom insisted that his Peyote ritual was different from others in Nevada because he had studied with Comanche in Oklahoma for extended periods from 1939 to 1942 to learn the original ritual. But he also said he remembered attending a meeting conducted by Sam Lone Bear for the Shoshone on the Goshute

reservation when he happened to be visiting relatives there in 1929. He had attended meetings with Washo and with a Sioux conducting a meeting at Fort Hall. Foreign Indians, that is, Indians from other tribes, conducted meetings for the Paiute at McDermitt. Grover named Ramsey Walker, a Washo, and Ralph Turtle, an Arapaho.

Stanley Smart, a McDermitt Paiute who had been fireman at the meeting I attended there named additional visiting roadmen from Fort Hall, Idaho, Wind River, Wyoming, and Oklahoma. Stanley had attended meetings with Northern Cheyenne in Montana, with Ute in Utah, with Navajo at Aneth, Utah, and others. He has been invited to be roadman at Healdsburg, California, Fort Hall, Idaho and Gardnerville, Nevada.

My most unusual discoveries in 1972 involved Sam Lone Bear, such as the instance related by Grover Tom above. Several families in Fallon remembered Sam Lone Bear, and knew that Mamie Charley, a Shoshone of that town, had married him. An old Peyotist at Pyramid Lake recalled that Willie Hardin of McDermitt had been nearly dead and had been cured by Sam at Pyramid Lake.

Most remarkable was finding a Shoshone Indian, Sam Long, on the Te-Moak Reservation south of Elko who had as a sacred object a carved staff that his father had received from Sam Lone Bear in 1929. I visited him a second time in 1978 and learned more about the new rules for conducting a Peyote ceremony he said he had learned directly from God through Peyote. God had told him to reverse the ceremonial direction from clockwise to counter-clockwise. He had no fire in the ritual and used a cloth altar. His following is so small it is unlikely that his special ritual will survive him.

The Native American Church of Nevada has converted a very small percentage of the total Indian population in Nevada. However, cultural and social patterns connected with Peyote are found similar to those elsewhere in the United States. Opposition to Peyotism arrived from outside the state even before Peyote ceremonies were practiced. The Nevada NAC has had regular encouragement from outside Indians, and Nevada Peyotists since 1936 have been regularly bolstered by visits with Peyotists in other states. In 1978 the vitality of Peyotism in Nevada suggested it would continue indefinitely.

In Nevada, I discovered what appeared at first to be a unique behavior pattern. Joe Green, an active Paiute medicineman, was at the same time a devout Episcopalian and a devotee of Peyotism. He believed in and practiced three religions at a time. Since I became aware of that religious phenomenon in 1938, I have found it many times among Peyotists throughout the United States and Mexico. In time I came to realize (and then I confirmed this from published examples)

that human beings universally appear able and willing to add religions together and practice them alternately, yet maintaining them discrete. Except for peoples reared in or fully converted to Christianity, Islam or Judaism the ability to easily carry on three or more religions simultaneously appears to be the rule.