



Indian 'Messiah' *Reports Not True*

During the summer and autumn of 1890, there was much excitement among some Indian tribes because of rumors of the coming of an Indian Messiah. He was said to be promising to restore the old order by driving out white people and bringing back the buffalo.

The cult was said to have had its origin among the Pah-Utes of Nevada, where the alleged prophet or Messiah lived, according to J.B. Thoburn's "History of Oklahoma." Thence its teachings were spread among the tribes of Idaho, Wyoming and Dakota. From the Sioux of Dakota, the Arapahoes brought it to Oklahoma, where it soon spread among the Cheyennes and Kiowas.

In eager expectation of the promises, many western Oklahoma tribes held ceremonial conclaves called "Ghost Dances." Most Indians were interested but not all were credulous. Apiatan, an influential Kiowa leader, decided to find out the truth. His investigation was encouraged by the tribal agent and military authorities who feared trouble if the Indians became too excited over the ghost dances.

Apiatan visited Indian tribes in Dakota, Wyoming and Idaho before he located the man claimed to be the Messiah in a remote part of Nevada.

A few direct and pointed questions demonstrated to Apiatan's satisfaction that the so-called Messiah was an imposter who was playing upon the credulity of his overly trustful red brothers for the sake of presents that they might make to him.

Apiatan's return to Oklahoma and report on his findings immediately cooled the ardor of the Messiah's devotees and there was no serious outbreak.