

**“A PEOPLE’S DREAM DIED THERE:”
SHATTER ZONES AND THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI WEST**

by
Brian Craig Miller

At the conclusion of the Wounded Knee massacre, Black Elk, a Holy Man from the Oglala Sioux, reflected on what had taken place, not only at Wounded Knee but also throughout the history of Sioux relations with white America. He said, “And so it was over. I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now from the high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch...And I can see that something else dies there in the bloody mud and was buried in the blizzard. A people’s dream died there. It was a beautiful dream.”¹

When the cannons silenced on that frigid day of December 28, 1890, somewhere between one-hundred fifty and three hundred Native Americans lay dead, ending several decades of resistance to United States policies of Americanization, relocation, and extermination. The tragic event on the South Dakota landscape brought into fruition the final wave of “shatter zones” that had altered the American landscape since Europeans made contact in the sixteenth century. In 1890, as Frederick Jackson Turner noted, the frontier had closed. Jackson’s frontier thesis received abundant criticism from historians, particularly in regard to having selected 1890 as the date the frontier closed. Yet 1890 did end an era of exploration for Americans on the continental United States and marked the shattering of the dominance of Native Americans in the West.² As Europeans explored and settled the American continent, a series of waves would reverberate from Plymouth and Jamestown, resulting in the eventual transformation of the Trans-Mississippi West.

This article examines the ramifications of the “shatter zones” in the Trans-Mississippi West, focusing on how disease, capitalism, and alcohol

Brian Craig Miller is currently serving as an instructor at the University of Mississippi, where he completed his Ph.D in February 2006.

forced Native Americans to adapt to an ever-shifting landscape, riddled with explorers and settlers who were driven by greed, desire, and the quest to fulfill the concept of Manifest Destiny. By applying the model of the “shatter zones,” outlined herein, this article provides a new lens for future historians to use in understanding how Native Americans survived the reverberations of contact.

The concept of “shatter zones” remains relatively unexplored in the historiography of Native American culture. Nevertheless, historians have used the terminology in a number of distinctive methods. Eric Wolf, in his work *Europe and a People Without History*, examines the effects of capitalism on Africa, as ushered in by European explorers. Wolf shows how areas of instability, created within Africa, resulted in political turmoil, cultural upheaval, social transformation, and dislocation wherever Europe landed for the purpose of colonial development. Richard White, in his work *The Middle Ground*, utilizes the term “shatter zone” to examine the chaos that developed within the Great Lakes region between 1620 and 1660. As the Iroquois rose to dominance in the seventeenth century, the “fragments of contact and change” forced the remnants of the Algonquians west, allowing for refugee clusters to form as “survivors of the Iroquois shatter zone.”³

The idea of “shatter zones” developed further with the recent work of ethnohistorian Robbie Ethridge. Ethridge defined shatter zones as “large regions of instability from which shock waves radiate for sometimes hundreds of miles.” Ethridge examined the eastern woodlands of North America and found that “when the English, French, and Dutch introduced capitalism into the area through a trade in Indian slaves and furs,” Native Americans reacted to the chaos created by European exploration and contact by forming new militaristic predatory societies out of the original populations. A small number of militaristic slaving Indian societies held control of the slave trade and “caused widespread dislocation, migration, amalgamation, and in some cases, extinction of native peoples.” Ethridge echoes the language of Charles Hudson, who re-iterated the idea that Native Americans suffered from the introduction of disease and capitalism, with the eventual result of demographic collapse. The “shatter zones” produced “tumultuous and violent” waves that resulted in the demise of the chiefdoms in the southeastern United States.⁴

Through expansion of Ethridge's framework, a "shatter zone" is defined as a wide series of regional, social, cultural, and political upheavals as a result of Old World disease, and a capitalist market system rooted in the slave and fur trade. Yet, when exploring the literature of the Trans-Mississippi West, alcohol also emerges as an element that unintentionally attempted to shatter the Native American way of life. Alcohol had the possibility of bringing dreams that closely resembled the visions many Native Americans residing in the plains hoped to have in the course of their life. In his memoirs, Chief Red Fox wrote, "Before the white man introduced whiskey among them, they had never tasted strong drink, but the phrase 'like a drunken Indian' came into the language in the seventeenth century. The trader found that a few drinks of whiskey conditioned the Indian for selling his furs, or even his homestead, for a pittance." Liquor readily flowed as traders sought to gain land and merchandise from the Indians across the western landscape. In some cases, Indians "happily exchanged a whole season's gathering of pelts for a bottle or two of rum." A future chief, fond of whiskey, could be "induced to touch the pen in the name of all."⁵ Even with missionary efforts, as well as government restrictions, the flow of liquor continued to dominate in the West. Thus, alcohol must be included as a precursor and eminent influence in producing waves for "shatter zones" in the West.

With the definition in place, let us now turn to a detailed examination of how the scene of the West was set for the ramifications of "shatter zones" to alter the Trans-Mississippi West. Of the four criteria, disease caused the greatest number of ramifications against the Native American culture. As Robert Utley noted, "A 'disease frontier' rolled across the continent in front of the other frontiers identified by Frederick Jackson Turner." By 1850, the "disease frontier" had shattered the native demographic numbers by ninety percent.⁶ Not only measles, diphtheria, and smallpox but also waves of cholera, plague, typhus, influenza, malaria, and yellow fever drastically reduced Native numbers across the West. After a smallpox outbreak amongst the Mandan in the early nineteenth century, the Mandan population had declined from 3600 to 125 in 1837. Smallpox also resulted in a loss of seventy percent of the Arikara and Hidatsa populations, while the Blackfeet lost sixty-six percent of the total population. Combined, the loss of the Yanktonai and Santee totaled at least 1200. The

Mandan, as well as other groups located in the Northern Plains, suffered thirty-six major epidemics from 1714 to 1919.⁷

In 1787, Saukamappee, a Cree living amongst the Blackfeet, offered David Thompson, a fur trader, a horrifying description of what small pox had done to the Blackfeet population in 1781. He remembered, "We thus continued to advance through the fine plains to the Stag River when death came over us all, and swept away more than half of us by the Small pox, of which we knew nothing until it brought death among us." Thompson's account revealed that the Blackfeet caught smallpox from the Snake Indians, who had been suffering from the disease. The sight of the infected Snake Indians brought terror to the eyes of Saukamappee, as "there was no one to fight with but the dead and the dying, each a mass of corruption." The disease spread among the Blackfeet, traveling from tent to tent, as the "Bad Spirit" carried it from place to place. "We had no belief that one man could give it to another," Saukamappee stated. "When at length it left us, and we moved about to find our people, it was no longer with the song and the dance; but with tears, shrieks and howlings of despair for those who would never return to us." The shattering effects of small pox obliterated the morale of the Blackfeet, as their "hearts were low and dejected, and we shall never be again the same people."⁸

As Linea Sundstrom concludes, "epidemics of European diseases preceded the period of regular contact with non-native populations." As documented, fur traders who explored the Missouri River Valley brought with them smallpox on several trading occasions. The Lakota Sioux tended to contract smallpox infection when raiding the weakened Mandan, Arikara, and Skidi. As William Clark noted, when visiting the Mandan, "The Sioux and smallpox killed the greater part of them and made them so weak that all that were left only made two small villages when collected." The Sioux, displaced from the Great Lakes to the Great Plains because of the waves of the "shatter zone," tended not to contract smallpox directly from white explorers. As the Sioux adopted the buffalo into their culture, the "shatter zone" forced them into contact with Native groups already infested with smallpox.⁹ At the same time, the displacement of the Sioux, who used warfare to secure their position on the plains, disrupted Mandan society. Thus, both disease and warfare were equally important in the shattering of the Mandan.

In a report to the government in 1822, Jedediah Morse wrote, "In 1802, it [smallpox] swept off half the population from the Missouri to New Mexico, in the region of the Pawnees, and west to the Rocky Mountains: and the Ottawas, at L'Abre Croche, about the year 1799, lost half their numbers by the same disease." Report after report noted the ramifications that smallpox had on decimating the native population. In 1837, Albert Gallatin received a horrifying description of a smallpox infestation amongst the Mandan. The account stated the following:

The scene was horrible-the large level prairie surrounding the Village had been converted into one great grave yard, whilst hundreds of (loathsome) carcasses (which had not received the rights of sepulture) lay moldering on the surface of the earth, emitting fetid exhalations which poisoned the surrounding atmosphere-and made it quite sickening even at a distance of several miles. A desperate phrenzy seems to have seized the few survivors in order to escape a loathsome lingering death- put an end to their own lives- some by throwing themselves from a high rocky precipice which stands near the village, others by drowning, hanging etc.- Thirty-one Mandans only were living at the time I passed their villages.¹⁰

One of the most useful sources explaining how disease damaged the Great Plains can be found in the journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Charles Floyd, one of the explorers on the expedition, described a visit to the area where Chief Black Bird had succumbed to smallpox with "about 300 of his men." In another instance, John Ordway, when visiting the Mahar Village, wrote, "We broke our way through them [wild peas] till we came to where their had been a village of about 300 cabins called the Mahar village. It was burned about 4 years ago immediately after near half the nation died with the Smallpox, which was as I was informed about 400."¹¹

Native Americans embraced different methods to cope with the horrors of disease. The Kiowa created a legend utilizing Saynday, the trickster hero of the Kiowa, who would protect them from smallpox and push it upon the Pawnee, their enemies. Saynday encountered a black horse, with

a rider dressed in black. When he questioned the stranger as to his identity, the stranger said, "I'm Smallpox." He told Saynday that he came from across the eastern ocean and that he became one with the white men, traveling either ahead or behind them. Smallpox warned Saynday, "I bring death. My breath causes children to wither like young plants in the snow. I bring destruction. No matter how beautiful a woman is, once she has looked at me she becomes as ugly as death. And to men I bring not death alone, but the destruction of their children and the blighting of their wives." The Kiowa suffered smallpox epidemics into the twentieth century, with the largest being the "smallpox winter" of 1839-40.¹²

The Sioux serve as an appropriate case study to look exactly at how the waves of a shatter zone moved across the Mississippi River. The Sioux, divided into the Dakota (eastern), Yankton-Yanktonai (middle) and Lakota (western), underwent a drastic series of migrations and cultural transformations. During the seventeenth century, the Native Americans in New England and the Great Lakes region fled westward to escape the chaos of contact. At the same time, the Dakota Sioux, established around present day Wisconsin and Minnesota, found themselves forced into southern Minnesota by the invading Ojibwa, who, consequently, had been pushed westward by shatter zones. By the time of the Dakota migration, the Yankton and Lakota had already been forced across the Mississippi River into the Dakota Territory, resulting in all of the Sioux being forced out of their ancestral home by the late 1700s.¹³

The Sioux did not hold control of the Great Lakes region alone. In the eastern region of Wisconsin, where Milwaukee and Green Bay currently stand, the Fox, Menominee, Sauk, and Winnebago flourished until the introduction of fur trade, a key element in the formation of "shatter zones." Disease permeated into Wisconsin throughout the seventeenth century, resulting in six-sevenths of the Menominee warriors perishing from a 1762 smallpox outbreak. Furthermore, the increasing European demand for fur introduced alcohol and an increased demand for the valuable land that held the wealth of beaver, elk, bison, and deer skins. At the same time, the threat of Iroquois attacks also loomed on the horizon, as the Iroquois felt constant pressure from the eastern waves of the "shatter zone," as noted by historian Richard White. Yet, despite the presence of European traders, Jeanne Kay argues that the native populations in Wisconsin actually

stabilized and grew. New tribal combinations, formed as a result of flight and displacement from the east, combined with intermarriage and the adoption of prisoners of war into native society, allowed for population stability.¹⁴ Although the tribes never regained their pre-contact numbers, the Native Americans in Wisconsin survived the first waves of a shatter zone, only to be later displaced by war and removal treaties.

With the Sioux displaced from their ancestral homelands, the cultural elements of the Sioux drastically changed. The Lakota, pushed up to one thousand miles into present day Wyoming and Montana, took up the role of nomadic horsemen, hunting the buffalo and abandoning a past of growing wild rice. By adopting the horse, the Lakota emerged as “the last, great barrier to Euro American domination of the Plains.”¹⁵ The Yankton, who found themselves pushed into the northern reaches of the Dakota territory, took on the characteristics of their new-found trading partners, including earth lodge dwellings and changes in dress, to reflect directly the culture of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara. As noted earlier, the Yankton came to dominate the region due to the debilitating effect of smallpox. The Dakota, still in the east, faced mounting pressure from the U.S. government and sold their lands in 1837 to end any Sioux grip on the once vibrant ancestral area. By the end of 1862, when the Dakota conflict came to an end, the remaining Dakota faced removal by the Lincoln administration, across the Mississippi River.

The Sioux did not stand alone in their displacement from the “shatter zone” in the region of the Great Plains. The Chicago Treaty of 1833 removed the Potawatomi, Sauk, Miami, Illini, and Kansas from the area of the Old Northwest Territory into the southern Great Plains. The American government, particularly rooted in the ideology of Jefferson, hoped that removal would solve the “Indian problem” in American society. Yet, as the forced removal and displacement took place, the government did not realize what effects the Natives would face from having to compete with other native groups for a dwindling resource base. The number of buffalo dwindled over the course of the nineteenth century from close to sixty million in 1800 to thirteen million in 1870. Fewer than one thousand buffalo remained by 1900. The American government pushed for westward settlement, as it created the Kansas and Nebraska territories as well as developed plans for a transcontinental railroad. Opening more

territory forced the Chicago Treaty tribes northward and into constant conflict with the Sioux, already displaced from the reverberating waves of the zone.¹⁶

Another prime example of a Plains tribe that changed is the Omaha, once the most powerful group along the middle region of the Missouri River. The smallpox epidemic of 1800 obliterated the population and caused the death of the chief, Black Bird. Black Bird most likely brought smallpox back from a visit with the Pawnee. The death of Black Bird, as well as the death of up to four hundred warriors, left the Omaha with few resources to defend against the other displaced native populations. William Clark confirmed the number of dead, stating, “400 men and women and children in perpoposion [sic].” The Omaha had been left “to the insults of their weaker neighbors.” Clark concluded that the chaos of smallpox forced the Omaha to burn their own village and “put their wives and children to death with a view of their all going together to some better country.”¹⁷

The ravages of smallpox left the Omaha at the mercy of their warring neighbors. The Skidi Pawnee conquered the Omaha without a fight. The Sioux proved a constant threat, more so after 1800, when a series of raids left “the grisly spectacle of Sioux women dancing while holding poles decorated with Omaha scalps.” In 1844, Chief Eagle of the Sioux declared, “His tribe intended to kill Omahas, not white.” Although the Mormons offered protection, the Omaha again faced the brunt of Sioux vengeance on December 12, 1846, as a Yankton party killed seventy-three women and children, many, according to Mormon accounts, as they slept. Major John Miller asked, “What will these poor Omahas do—will the government do nothing for them? If they go South, the Iowas are on them—if they go up the river, the Sioux are killing them off.”¹⁸ In other words, the Omaha stood surrounded by the direct definitions of the “shatter zone.” The Omaha may serve as the most fitting example of a Native population shattered not only by the white forces of the zone, but the transplanted Indian forces as well. Chief Big Elk of the Omaha reflected on the chaos around him and said, “I am like a large prairie wolf, running about over these barren prairies, in search of something to eat, with his head up, anxiously listening to hear some of his fellows howl, that he may dart off towards them, hoping to find a friend who has a bone to divide.”¹⁹

Beyond disease and warfare, the Omaha also had to deal with the force of trade goods, particularly whiskey. By the 1830s, "Not an Indian could be found among a thousand who would not (after a first drink) sell his horse, his gun, or his last blanket, for another [drink]." ²⁰ Although the government had forbidden the liquor trade with Native Americans, the trade poured into Omaha society, poisoning the mind and producing negligence for hunting and finishing daily chores. J.L. Beam stated, "Liquor flows freely as the Missouri....If it was possible to imagine half the human misery I have witnessed...you would use utmost influence in having it stopped." ²¹ Alcohol, disease, and warfare had truly shattered the once dominant role the Omaha held on the plains. The Great Plains now stood open for other tribes, notably the Sioux, to secure a prominent role. However, warfare with the American government during the nineteenth century completely shattered Sioux hegemony on the plains, leaving the America frontier open for white settlement.

The trade for alcohol spread farther west beyond the Omaha. As Lewis and Clark visited with the Assinniboins, Lewis noted how the Indians would barter wolf and fox skins for "small kegs of rum which they generally transport to their camps at a distance from the establishments." Once the keg arrived back in the Assinniboin village, "they revel with their friends and relations as long as they possess the means of intoxication, their women and children are equally indulged on those occasions and are all seen drunk together." Although he provided no reason for the women and children partaking in the consumption of alcohol, Lewis offered a glimpse as to the motivation of the men for seeking an intoxicated state. He wrote, "That with the men, it is a matter of exultation that their skill and industry as hunters has enabled them to get drunk frequently." ²² Although alcohol had not encapsulated the entire West, where it did reach provided a drastic alteration in Native American culture. How could the Indians ever have wanted alcohol if someone had not first introduced them to it?

The interplay of fur and alcohol trade in the west followed and sometimes accompanied waves of disease. Lewis and Clark also noted the effects of disease on the Shoshones, as they crossed the Continental Divide. Lewis traced the evolution of smallpox, noting, "These people have suffered much by the smallpox which is known to be imported and perhaps those other disorders might have been contracted from other Indian tribes

who by a round of communication might have obtained them from the Europeans since it was introduced into that quarter of the globe.”²³ In essence, Lewis saw the wave of disease that hit the Shoshone coming from the corners of the Pacific Northwest. Pretty Shield, a member of the Crow, remembered how the Crow caught smallpox from the Shoshoni. She remembered, “When a woman sees whole families wiped out, even whole clans, and cannot help, cannot even hope, her heart falls down and she wishes she could die.”²⁴ The powerful consequence that smallpox produced notified all Native Americans that no one was safe.

While the shattering waves moved from east to west, a simultaneous “shatter zone” developed on the Pacific Coast, introduced by Spanish missions and fur traders from Russia and England. For example, California faced two shatter zones, one on the Pacific Coast and one moving from the east, brought via the gold rush in the 1840s. In 1542, Spaniards traveled along the coast of California and made contact with the coastal tribes in California. In 1769, the first Spanish mission appeared in California. Approximately 300,000 natives resided within the state. By the time Mexico declared independence from Spain in 1821, the California Indians had been devastated by disease, reducing the population numbers to approximately 200,000. With an end to the mission system, and the invasion of white Americans during the Mexican War, the culture and health of the California Indians was obliterated.²⁵

Despite the initial waves created by Spanish settlement, the California native populations stabilized and underwent a lower rate of decline. However, a new wave of death, emerging with the gold rush that led some Americans to use genocide in order to stake their claim in California, reduced the numbers further to about 150,000 in 1848. As one member of the Sinkyone remembered, “About ten o’clock in the morning, some white men came. They killed my grandfather and my mother and my father. I saw them do it/I was a big girl at the time. Then they killed my baby sister and cut her heart out and threw it in the brush where I ran and hid.” The scared victim did not know what to do and only hid amongst the brush “with my little sister’s heart in my hands.” The Sinkyone, numbering near four thousand before the gold rush, numbered only a handful by the close of the Civil War. The Sinkyone represent only one group terrorized throughout California. The Wintu, numbering over 14,000 found their

numbers fewer than 1,000 after the wave of the gold rush. Overall, the 1850s ushered in immense destruction, lowering the native populace to a meager 30,000 by the time of the American Civil War.²⁶

California also presents an opportunity to look at the ramifications of the capitalistic elements of the “shatter zone” on the native populace. With the entrance of the gold mining settlers, California entered into the era of modern capitalism that raked household structures and conditions. By introducing California natives to ideas of capitalism and monetary value, the natives underwent drastic identity and cultural reconstructions. At the same time, settlers used violence against the Indians due to past racial stereotypes, ignorance, fear, and how other native groups were treated in the past throughout the nation. As violence shattered California, demographic collapse commenced with “imbalanced sex ratios, coupled with shrinking populations in community after community, reduced chances for family formation.”²⁷ Ultimately, warfare, disease, and starvation, as well as the cultural change exhibited through capitalism, shattered the California populations to a state almost unrecognizable.

To the north of California, the Pacific Northwest could not maintain immunity against the ravages of disease. Cole Harris argued that the Northwest smallpox epidemic originated with the 1780-81 epidemic on the plains, proving that a shattering effect of smallpox spread from the east to west. The plains origin theory is based on missionary accounts from informants of the Nez Perce, who were residing in Oregon. He also points out that there was another epidemic of smallpox, originating in the Puget Sound in 1801, thus proving a second shatter zone developing in the Pacific region. Here, although the smallpox came from Spanish ships from Mexico or from Russian explorers in Alaska, the conclusion remains the same: Disease most likely came into the lives of the Pacific Indians from two different directions.²⁸

Robert Boyd does not directly agree with the theory of the plains epidemic. He argues that, “Numerous lines of evidence suggest that smallpox was introduced to the Northwest Coast with the 1755 Bruno de Hezeta-Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Wuadra Expedition.” Yet, after some discussion, Boyd also conceded “It is possible that we are dealing with two or more regional outbreaks, each with its own history.” Boyd utilizes the evidence from John Work, a trader, who wrote in 1829,

“Immense numbers of them [Salishan speakers] were swept off by a dreadful visitation of the smallpox that from the appearance of some individuals that bear marks of the disease, may have happened fifty or sixty years ago [1769-79].”²⁹

Before the arrival of Lewis and Clark, Captain George Vancouver, exploring the Puget Sound, wrote on the remnants of disease. He said, “In our different excursions, particularly those in the neighborhood of port Discovery, the skull, limbs, ribs and back bones, or some vestiges of the human body, were found in many places promiscuously scattered about the beach, in great numbers.” Disease had hit the Northwest with such speed and ferocity that it created a “general cemetery for the whole of the surrounding country.” Vancouver accurately concluded that at one time, “This country had been far more populous than at present.”³⁰

In his own words, Meriwether Lewis conveyed the horrific ramifications of smallpox on the tribes along the Missouri River. He wrote, “The smallpox has destroyed a great number of the natives in this quarter, it prevailed about 4 years since among the Clatsops and destroy[ed] several hundred of them, four of their chiefs fell victim to its ravages.” Lewis continued, “I think the late ravages of the smallpox may well account for the number of remains of villages which we find deserted on the river and Sea coast in this quarter.”³¹ Throughout their journey, Lewis and Clark noticed the flow of smallpox, as if it just followed the Missouri River until it reached the Pacific Coast. Near present day Portland, Lewis wrote, “An old man appeared of some note among them...brought forward a woman who was badly marked with the Small Pox and made signs that they all died with the disorder that marked her face.”³² Despite recognizing the terrible nature of smallpox, a cure remained virtually improbable, as the disease ran its course across the country, taking many lives.

The tribes in the Pacific Northwest constantly felt the effects of the Pacific Coast “shatter zone.” As European traders immersed themselves in the world of the potlatch ceremony, the stakes for each ceremony rose with changes brought by wealthy European fur traders. The traders, rich in goods and seeking otter pelts, used cedar bark blankets to trade, allowing for changes in the potlatch ceremony. The ceremony also underwent psychological and cultural changes, as the Europeans forbade warfare

amongst the Pacific tribes and transformed the ceremony into an outlet for aggression amongst the Native Americans.³³

Even with the development of the European trade network, alcohol, according to Lewis and Clark, does not seem to be of great need amongst the Clatsops and Chinooks. Lewis wrote, "These people do not appear to know the use of spirituous liquors, they never having once asked us for it; I presume therefore that the traders who visit them have never indulged them with the use of it...It is a very fortunate occurrence, as well for the natives themselves, as for the quiet and safety of those whites who visit them." In this passage, Lewis ponders the horrific effects alcohol had on both the attitude and health of the native populations.³⁴

Beyond Lewis and Clark, missionaries also noted the role of alcohol amongst the groups along the Pacific. Ross Cox noted, "All the Indians on the Columbia entertain a strong aversion to ardent spirits, which they regard as poison...that slaves only drink to excess; and that drunkenness is degrading to free men." With the eventual decline of beaver pelts, traders had to raise the price of liquor to include more slaves needed for trade. The reliance on alcohol forced the Indians to the will of slavery imposed by British traders into the nineteenth century. Although Americans tried to point the finger of blame for increased slavery only at the British, John Dunn said, "The Americans consider that every artifice is legitimate in trade."³⁵ Despite efforts to curb the trade of slaves for alcohol, illegal trading continued throughout the West and brought into fruition the realities of a "shatter zone."

The preceding article has provided future historians a possible window into exploring the effects of the "shatter zone" on the Trans-Mississippi West. In order to determine whether a "shatter zone" framework provides a useful tool in exploring the West, future scholars must examine how specific Western tribes dealt with the waves of disaster flooding from the eastern woodlands and from the Pacific Northwest. At the same time, other questions emerge as to when and if the waves of the shatter zone ceased movement. How did warfare instituted by the United States alter or possibly curtail the movement of the "shatter zones?" As hinted, most likely, the "shatter zone" set the stage for the American government to assert its militaristic influence over the Native American tribes. Furthermore, how did the forced removal of the Choctaw, Chickasaw,

Cherokee, Seminole, and Creek, as well as others, alter the landscape and possibly shatter the tribes of Oklahoma?³⁶

As the waves of a “shatter zone” maneuvered across the Mississippi River, Native Americans felt the full force of the shock waves that brought alcohol, disease, slavery, and the fur trade. As tribes underwent displacement, removal, and repositioning across the western landscape, warfare erupted as Native Americans fought among themselves to utilize the dwindling resource base. Intentionally, the “shatter zone” received support from the American government, as policies of Removal, Americanization, and Extermination furthered the already debilitating ramifications of disease, warfare, and alcoholism. Despite virtual demographic collapse, several Native American tribes persisted through the waves of the “shatter zone.” Yet they still had to face the blast of power and the effects of raining shot and lead from American soldiers, who were determined, in the shadow of the bloodiest conflict in American society, to inflict a different meaning of freedom for the “others.”

Although the dream of being free died amidst the frozen prairie, a new dream of self-determination emerged from the memory and legacy of those who had given their lives for the continued taste of freedom. Although Black Elk had declared with the end of the dream that, “There is no center any longer, and the sacred tree is dead,” he also sent a message of determination for the future. He said, “Great Spirit, Great Spirit, my Grandfather, all over the earth the faces of living things are all alike. With the tenderness have these come up out of the ground. Look upon these faces of children without number and with children in their arms, that they may face the winds and walk the good road to the day of quiet.”³⁷ Those that survived walked into the future, determined to make the best of a shattered past and broken present.

NOTES

1. John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*. (New York: Pocket Books, 1972), 230. For more on Wounded Knee, see Chief Red Fox, *The Memoirs of Chief Red Fox*. (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1971) and Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1970).

2. For more information on how the Turner thesis ignored the role of Native Americans, see David A. Nichols, "Civilization over Savage: Frederick Jackson Turner and the Indian." *South Dakota Quarterly*, Volume 2 (Fall 1972): 383-405.
3. Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and a People Without History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 160-193. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 11-14. See also Brian Ferguson and Neil Whitehead, *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*. (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1992).
4. Robbie Ethridge, "Raiding the Remains: Indian Slave Traders and the Collapse of the Southeastern Chiefdoms," presented at the Annual Meeting of the SEAC, November 14-17, 2001 in Chattanooga, TN; Robbie Ethridge, "Shatter Zone: Early Colonial Slave Raiding and its Consequences for the Natives of the Eastern Woodland Indians," presented at the American Society for Ethnohistory Annual Meeting, November 7-12, 2003 in Riverside CA; Charles Hudson, "Introduction" in Robbie Ethridge and Charles Hudson, eds. *The Transformation of the Southeastern Indians, 1540-1760*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 17. See also Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 24, 263 n.8.
5. Red Fox, *Red Fox*, 158; James A. Maxwell, ed. *America's Fascinating Indian Heritage*. (Pleasantville, N.Y.: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1978), 153, 192.
6. Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 12.
7. Maxwell, *Americas*, 192; Linea Sundstrom, "Smallpox Used Them Up: Reference to Epidemic Disease in Northern Plains Winter Counts, 1714-1920." *Ethnohistory*. Volume 44 (Spring 1997): 306, 108, 315.
8. Richard Glover, ed., *David Thompson's Narrative, 1784-1812*. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1962), 240-247.
9. Sundstrom, "Smallpox," 323; Gary E. Moulton, ed. *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: June 10-September 26, 1806*. Volume 8. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 308.
10. Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian*. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1973), 228-229.
11. Gary E. Moulton, ed. *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: The Journals of John Ordway, May 14, 1804-September 23, 1806, and Charles Floyd, May 14-August 18, 1804*. Volume 9. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 38, 394. All quotations from the Journals contain corrected spelling in order for the reader to clearly understand the text of the journals.
12. Alice Marriott and Carol K. Rachlin, *American Indian Mythology*. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), 173-177; Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 128-131.

13. Guy Gibbon, *The Sioux: The Dakota and Lakota Nations*. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 3. Gibbon reference to “push and pull” factors can be re-interpreted as the movement of the “shatter zone.”
14. Jeanne Kay, “The Fur Trade and Native American Population Growth.” *Ethnohistory*. Volume 31 (Fall 1984): 265-287, referenced specifically from pages 265, 268, and 277. Also see Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government Dealings with Some of the Indian Tribes*. (New York: Indian Head Books, 1993), 146.
15. Gibbon, *Sioux*, 4-5. For more on the cultural history of the Sioux, including a thorough examination of the Battle of the Little Bighorn and its role in popular memory, see James Welch, *Killing Custer: The Battle of Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians*. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994).
16. Gibbon, *Sioux*, 6-7; Maxwell, *America's*, 199.
17. Judith A. Boughter, *Betraying the Omaha Nation, 1790-1916*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 4, 22, 24; Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Volume 2: August 30, 1803-August 24, 1804*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 467, 478-479.
18. Boughter, *Betraying*, 23, 25, 53.
19. *Ibid.*, 33.
20. *Ibid.*, 45-47 includes a discussion of how alcohol altered Omaha society.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Volume 4: April 7-July 27, 1805*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 34-35. Clark, who was equally disturbed by the presence of alcohol, can be found on page 38.
23. Gary E. Moulton, ed. *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Volume 5: July 28-November 1, 1805*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 122.
24. Frank B. Linderman, *Pretty Shield: Medicine Woman of the Crows*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 45.
25. Maxwell, *America's*, 278-279; Albert L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 1.
26. Ballantine, *Native*, 312; Hurtado, *Indian*, 1. In the Appendix of *A Century of Dishonor*, Jackson provides a series of documents on the California experience, found on pages 458-514.
27. Hurtado, *Indian*, 10, 57, 107, 108, 168. The ushering in of the era of gold mining also altered the Nez Perce. For more, see Jackson, *Century*, 117.
28. Robert Boyd, “Commentary on Early Contact-Era Smallpox in the Pacific Northwest.” *Ethnohistory*. Volume 43 (Spring 1996): 307-309.
29. Boyd, “Commentary,” 309-311.
30. Ballantine, *Native*, 214.
31. Gary E. Moulton, ed. *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Volume 6: November 2, 1805-March 22, 1806*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 285. Clark echoes the same observation on page 286. Moulton notes that at least two

smallpox epidemics took place amongst the Chinookan before the arrival of Lewis and Clark. In the 1770s, the first outbreak was probably the most severe. A second wave, introduced a few years before the expedition arrived, produced the results witnessed by Lewis and Clark.

32. Gary E. Moulton, ed. *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Volume 7: March 23-June 9, 1806*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 65.

33. Maxwell, *America's*, 327.

34. Gary E. Moulton, ed. *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Volume 6: November 2, 1805-March 22, 1806*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 179. Clark echoes the same observation on page 196.

35. Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *Indian Slavery in the Pacific Northwest*. (Spokane, WA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1993), 107-108.

36. Some notable groups not discussed in detail here include the Apache, Nez Perce, and Utes, among others. Helpful works on these groups and how the shatter zone may have altered them include David Roberts, *Once They Moved Like the Wind: Cochise, Geronimo and the Apache Wars*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993); Bruce Hampton, *Children of Grace: The Nez Perce War of 1877*. (New York: Avon Books, 1994), and John Alton Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War*. (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1998).

37. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*, 5, 230.