

February 7, 1964

Mr. Click Relander
1212 N. 32nd. Ave.,
Yakima, Washington

Dear Mr. Relander;

From Caxton Printers Ltd. of Caldwell, Idaho I am informed that you once published through that firm a book entitled Drummers And Dreamers. This book, I am informed further, is now entirely out of print.

Could you possibly tell me how I can obtain a copy of Drummers And Dreamers? This book, I understand, treats comprehensively of the Dreamer religion of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest. I am intensely interested in this religious movement especially as it may have influenced the thought and psychology of the Indians during the period of unrest which culminated in the Nez Perce War of 1877.

I should like to do some scholarly research on native American religions, especially on the Dreamer religion and the Ghost Dance religion of the Paiutes. Any sources or references you might supply me would be greatly appreciated.

I thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

John R. Rogers
John R. Rogers

443 North Eleventh Ave.,
Pocatello, Idaho

May 8, 1964

Mr. Click Relander
3701 Commonwealth Road
Yakima, Washington

Dear Mr. Relander;

I wish to thank you for your comprehensive and helpful letter of April 8, 1964. I am sorry to hear that Drummers and Dreamers is all but unobtainable. I definitely want Strangers on the Land. This sounds as though it has much of the kind of material in which I am interested.

I hope, Mr. Relander, that I did not give the impression that I am a "scholar" or an established writer, for I am neither. My vocation - I am a railroad locomotive engineer - and the rearing of my family of five children pretty much precludes the serious effort essential to comprehensive research and writing. My study and writing for the foreseeable future, I think, must remain a subsidiary though fascinating part of my life activity. In the field of writing I am an amateur who, like all amateurs, hopes some day to become professional.

I am intensely interested in the history, ethnology, cultural heritage and sociology of the American Indians, particularly of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest. I consider the Nez Perce tribe as they were as Lewis and Clark found them a remarkable and noble people and I further consider the Nez Perce saga one of the noblest and most tragic in the history of heroic peoples. I would consider myself favored if I could qualify myself so that I could some day write something of value concerning these people.

From the tenor of your letter as well as from the titles of your published works I think that I am not presumptuous in concluding that you, also, value the history and heritage of the American Indian. Through the efforts of interested people such as yourself the American people has some assurance that the heritage of the Red Man will not be forgotten.

I had thought that if I could obtain the necessary research material - and your suggestions and references will be most ~~help~~ helpful in this - I might attempt a magazine article or two centering upon the Dreamer religion. Also, it seems to me that an article or story based on the life of Too-Hool-Hool-Sote might have possibilities, that is if there is sufficient data concerning his life and activities. Certainly, the confrontation of General Howard by the intrepid Dreamer is one of the more dramatic episodes of American history.

As you say, religion, Dreamer or otherwise, played a relatively minor role in the historical movement of the times. Perhaps the irreligion and ~~mis~~ cynical misuse of religion by certain elements among the whites were the catalytic and precipitating reagents in much of the ugliness and ferment of that era of history. Also, the harsh, even brutal, methods of well-meaning but, perhaps, ill-advised religionists - the Whitmans, Spauldings, Whites and Lees - in forcing these children of nature into the strict and uncompromising Calvinist mold invites further inquiry. There must be a number of fascinating stories implicit in the situation which prevailed when the Nez Perces, for example, were forcibly confronted with the Lex Talionis. Chief Joseph, according to McWhorter and others, was completely disillusioned with the white man's religion. It is implied that his Dreamer connection was his reaction against the contradictions and the disputations of the white religionists.

Still, as I understand it, the Indians - some Indians, at least - were intensely spiritual people. Chief Joseph, as I see it, displayed great depths of spirituality in his forbearance under injustice and persecution; yet he conducted what can only be termed an inspired campaign in a lost but - to him and his people - holy cause. His aim was to join with Sitting Bull, another holy warrior who later headed an Indian Messianic religion. According to McWhorter, high emissaries of the Nez Perces, among whom may have been Joseph, conferred with Sitting Bull prior to the battle of the Little Big Horn and had considered joining the Plains Indians in a massive campaign against the whites. I have gained from somewhere the impression that this proposed war had religious overtones and was to be in the nature of a jihad or holy war.

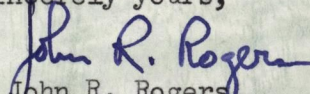
I am taking the liberty of enclosing a poem, "The Dreamer's Dance." This poem is imaginative and is based on my admittedly scanty knowledge of the subject material. If you would care to criticize this poem from the technical standpoint I would be most grateful.

I have been working on a versified treatment of the Nez Perce Story and the Dreamer poem was written with this in mind. I also enclose several other poems which would be included in this project.

The work essential in this would be monumental and I am not sure that there would be a demand for such a work even if it had poetic or literary merit. Your opinion on this would be appreciated.

Again, Mr. Relander, I thank you for your interest and help. I enclose three dollars (\$3.00) which I hope will cover the purchase price and mailing costs of Strangers on the Land. I shall anticipate reading and assimilating its contents.

Sincerely yours,


John R. Rogers

443 North Eleventh Ave.
Pocatello, Idaho