
SOCIETY

All could learn, he contends, from studying the program closely. By concentrating on the needs of children, Head Start avoids the "stigma" of welfare dependency, and it responds to blacks' "unique claims on the American conscience" without relying on racial quotas or other devices. And it is one of the few federal programs that manages to tap the creative energies of the communities it serves.

Tecumseh and His Brother

"Tecumseh, The Shawnee Prophet, and American History: A Reassessment" by R. David Edmunds, in *The Western Historical Quarterly* (July 1983), Utah State Univ., Logan, Utah 84322.

Tecumseh, the famous war chief of the Shawnees, survives in American legend as the "greatest Indian." But according to Edmunds, a Texas Christian University historian, Tecumseh (1768–1813) was, in his day, overshadowed by his younger brother Tenskwatawa, the "Shawnee Prophet."

Born Lalawethika ("Loudmouth"), the prophet-to-be lapsed into alcoholism in his youth, along with many other Indians who encountered the white man in eastern Ohio early in the 19th century. But in 1805, at about age 30, Lalawethika fell into a coma from which he emerged claiming to have returned from the dead, sent by the Master of Life to save his people. He renounced whiskey, white man's food, and metal tools, and took the name Tenskwatawa ("The Open Door"), symbolizing his role as a leader of an Indian spiritual and moral revival.

Shawnee mythology had warned of the arrival of pale-faced invaders sent by the Great Serpent to sow disorder. Tenskwatawa's claim to be the Shawnee savior was inadvertently aided by Indiana's governor, William Henry Harrison (later the ninth U.S. President), who challenged the Prophet to perform a miracle. Tenskwatawa, tipped off to an impending solar eclipse by itinerant astronomers, proceeded to "darken the sun" and thereby gained a wide following among Delawares, Kickapoos, and other Indian tribes in the Great Lakes region.

In 1809, Tenskwatawa opposed but failed to block the Treaty of Fort Wayne (negotiated by chiefs among the Miamis, Delawares, and Potawatomis), which resulted in the U.S. annexation of three million acres of Indian land. Only after the Indians' ill-fated attack, inspired by Tenskwatawa, on Harrison's forces at Tippecanoe in 1811 was the holy man's powerlessness revealed. He soon lost his following and died in Kansas in 1836. Tecumseh, who had served as his brother's spokesman, mobilized Tenskwatawa's religious following in a last attempt to unite the Midwest tribes politically and militarily, says Edmunds. The effort failed; Tecumseh died in battle in 1813.

Why have white Americans immortalized Tecumseh and forgotten his brother? Tecumseh's bravery in battle, explains Edmunds, fit their stereotype of the "noble savage," and his political aims seemed more sensible to white historians than his brother's religious approach. In short, Tecumseh was a "white man's Indian."