

Today there may be many heirs to one 160-acre tract of land.

During the allotment crisis and general lowering of morale in the early 1890's many Cheyenne found renewed hope in the Ghost Dance Religion, whose central tenet was a belief in an approaching millenium in which the buffalo would return, dead relatives would live again, and the white man would fade away. Others were attracted to the Peyote Religion which was then gaining adherents among the tribes of western Oklahoma. The peyote ritual centered around the sacramental eating of a spineless cactus, Lophophora williamsii, for attaining religious experience. This ritual was later formally recognized as the Native American Church. Many Cheyenne joined Christian churches. Others continued in traditional religious practices and clung to belief in the power of the Sacred Arrows.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho combined population seems to have declined from the reservation period until about the mid-1920's. Since then it has doubled and is probably increasing at a rapid rate today. There are approximately 6,600 enrolled Cheyenne and Arapaho today, about 3,500 of which live in the former reservation area. It is estimated that about sixty-eight per cent of the combined tribes are Cheyenne. Approximately 109,000 acres of land remain in individual Indian ownership. Cheyenne children attend the public schools in their areas. Many finish high school and some go on to seek higher education in colleges and universities.

Modern Identity and Self-Determination

Despite certain distressing aspects of the economic picture, most Cheyenne today are optimistic concerning their future as individuals and as a tribe. Since the mid-1930's the government has increasingly recognized the worth of the various Indian cultures and the right of Indian