[Your Name]

[Instructor Name]

[Course Number]

[Date]

Wounded Knee and Ghost Dance

**Introduction**

When the armies from Europe moved to North America, they carried out huge massacres of the native people. These armies also forcibly evacuated many territories of the country. The indigenous population was reduced to mere fractions after the invaders came there. The Ghost dance was initiated by the native American tribes to reinstate their national identity and sovereignty. It was associated with the beliefs of the native people. They sought a spiritual realization by indulging in this practice. In the late nineteenth century, the US army put an end to the native Indians’ resistance by carrying out a large-scale massacre. The wounded knee massacre was a condemnable incident that happened due to an ostensible misconception of the army regiment about the intention of the Sioux Indians. This essay describes what happened in wounded knee and explains the ghost dance tradition based on

"American Yawp” and “The Ghost-dance Religion and Wounded Knee” along with a historical analysis of these incidents.

**The Ghost Dance**

The Ghost dance emerged as a religious ritual or social tradition among the indigenous people of North America. There appeared so-called ‘prophets’ after certain periods who associated different types of religious illusions to this practice. One of these ‘prophets’ named Wovoka claimed that he had visions of spiritual kind, and he started spreading teachings which gave widespread acceptance to this practice. People were made to believe that they can reunite with their beloved ones who had died in the massacres by performing the ghost dance. Moreover, the ghosts of these dead would help them in their fighting with the white people. The invaders of their land would eventually leave and they would be a free nation once again (López-Rodríguez et al., 38). The Ghost Dance was performed in a circular motion where the leader of the ceremony remained at the center of the circle. The dance usually lasted for four days. Thousands of people participated in these ceremonies. They continued dancing in a circle until a certain large number of persons become unconscious.

The authors have provided a vivid detail of the ghost dance practice and the related activities. Mrs. Z. A. Parker gave the best description of the ceremony. People involved in the ghost dance used to wear ghost shirts to make the ceremony more formal. These shirts or clogs were made of cotton and colored white. The collars of these shirts were blue and the whole dress had imprints of the beautiful objects like birds, stars, arrows, bows, etc. While dancing in the circles, they used to name over their departed ones (Andersson, 106). They used to cry, moan, and shriek out their griefs of being brutally apart from their relatives and friends.

**Wounded Knee**

The teachings of Wovoka and the tradition of the ghost dance were embraced by the Lakota Indians of Sioux open-heartedly. They started resisting the US armies and the ways of life they had been imposing on them coercively. In 1890, the army targeted the Sioux Indians near the Wounded Knee Creek and opened fire on them (Locke and Wright, 46). More than seven hundred were massacred. The report given to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs gave an account of what happened at wounded knee. It was stated that a misconception about the Sioux residents due to a false report led to the massacre. It was a botched attempt to create peace in the region. The army encountered the Sioux Indians heading toward their agency with a different intention, ignorant of the fact that they would be mistaken to attempt an assault on the soldiers. The soldiers surrounded them near the creek and demanded their guns. They handed over the guns. Meanwhile, an unidentified person among the crowd fired his gun. The soldiers responded by opening fire and killing a large number of people indiscriminately. When the firing started, men ran toward the deep ravine and the women followed them. All were shot dead. The account described details of these brutal killings. Later, the soldiers felt sad about their condemnable action. Most of them regret killing women and children especially, they thought if it would have been only men, they had not felt so guilty (Mooney, 886).

The text narrates the incidents occurred in the wounded knee massacre concerning the interpretation rendered by Turning Hawk. The textbook gives account of the various killing with vivid description. It intends to be inclusive and provide a piece of comprehensive information on the subject. The synopsis of the event helps in understanding the event. The context of the event has been explained to justify the killings at wounded knee. The reader gets the impression that the soldiers had a misunderstanding about the intention of this group of people. The regiment had not started fire if the first attack would have not been made by the Indians. The fact that the regiment sought only peace was supported by reporting that the remaining portion of the Indians who were alive and hiding in their refuge were brought to the agency to provide shelter.

**Conclusion**

The suggested text sheds light on the ghost dance tradition and the wounded knee massacre. It describes the activities or the incidents associated with these events in detail. The context in which the massacre was exercised has been given to understand the causes of this incident. The elaborated narrative of the ghost dance and the graphic details of this practice creates an image in the reader's mind.

Works Cited

López-Rodríguez, Miriam, et al. *Old Stories, New Readings: The Transforming Power of American Drama*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.

Andersson, Rani-Henrik. *The Lakota Ghost Dance of 1890*. U of Nebraska Press, 2008.

Locke, Joseph L., and Ben Wright. *The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook*. 2019.

Mooney, James. *The Ghost-Dance Religion and Wounded Knee*. Courier Corporation, 1991.