



The Seminole Baptist Churches of Oklahoma: Maintaining a Traditional Community (Civilization of the American Indian)

Jack M. Schultz

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In this contemporary ethnography, Jack M. Schultz examines the role of religion in one American Indian society: the Seminole Baptists of Oklahoma. Basing his study on four years of fieldwork, Schultz shows how the Seminole Baptist church system helps maintain a traditional community. The people Schultz encountered are Baptist. They gather several times weekly in steepled churches for prayers, hymn singing, and sermons based on biblical texts. But they also are Seminole, conducting services primarily in the Mvskoke language and practicing Native customs, such as fasting in the woods and constructing grave houses to shelter the spirit as it returns to visit the body. Schultz provides a context for his study by tracing the history of the Seminole to the present day. He then discusses Seminole Baptist beliefs and practices, leadership roles, and the church's organizational structure, illustrating his observations with a detailed account of the social life of a single congregation.

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