

MCGARY



Battle at Bear Paw

Limited Edition Bust

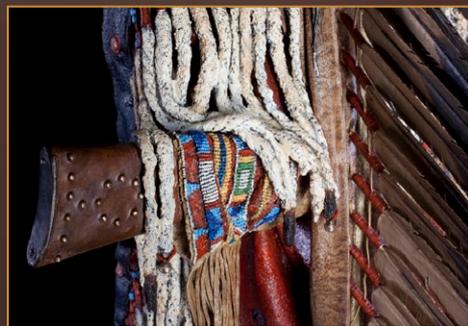
Limited Editions
Masterwork with base
Height- 37.5" • Width- 22.5"
Depth- 15.5"
Edition of 30

Maquette with base
Height- 25" • Width- 15"
Depth- 10.35"
Edition of 40

Bust with base.
Height- 26" • Width- 13"
Depth- 25"
Edition of 50



Battle at Bear Paw
Chief Joseph 1877



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Colonel Nelson A. Miles left Fort Keogh on September 18 in pursuit of Chief Joseph with a force of 520 soldiers, civilian employees, and scouts, including about 30 Indian scouts, mostly Cheyenne but with a few Lakota (Teton Sioux). Some of the Indian scouts had fought against Custer in the Battle of the Little Big Horn only 15 months earlier, but had subsequently surrendered to Miles



On September 25, Colonel Miles received a dispatch informing him of the Cow Creek fight and that the Nez Perce had crossed the Missouri going north. He changed his plans, crossed the Missouri, and headed toward the northern side of the Bear Paw Mountains to intercept Chief Joseph.

Colonel Miles said of the battle at Bear Paw that "The fight was the most fierce of any Indian engagement I have ever been in...The whole Nez Perce movement is unequalled in the history of Indian warfare."

For reasons never clarified by Colonel Miles, Chief Joseph was taken prisoner immediately after negotiations ended. In a strange circumstance of fate, Lt. Lowell Jerome had been allowed entry into the Nez Perce camp and was roaming unharmed. When the Nez Perce learned Chief Joseph was being held, they captured the young lieutenant. Rather than killing him as some in the village wanted to do, the Nez Perce offered to trade him for Chief Joseph. Whatever plan Colonel Miles had for Chief Joseph was forgotten. On the morning of October 2, Lt. Jerome and Chief Joseph were exchanged under a flag of truce.

It is claimed that the stunning coat as depicted in this bronze, was given to second Lt. Jerome by Chief Joseph; this jacket was worn by Chief Joseph during the battle and siege at Bear Paw. Lt. Jerome donated this coat to his alma mater, the United States Military Academy at West Point where it now is on display in the museum's permanent collection. His war coat made of red trade wool believed to have been obtained from the Sioux has polished brass trade buttons sewn in a distinct pattern all over the coat. Chief Joseph wore this coat in numerous battles and added the white ermines that was a favorite and distinctive adornment of the Nez Perce's regalia.

His war bonnet inspired from photographs has a long trailer of honor feathers that confirms his accomplishments



among his people and in battle. His moccasins are beaded with a traditional and beautiful beadwork designs of the Nez Perce. Along with the Crow, the Nez Perce were greatly admired for their artistry in regalia and were always desired in trades or sought as trophies in warfare. The Martingale the Chief holds is worn around the neck of his favorite war horse. Made out of trade wool and ornately beaded and decorated with hawk bells. This was a striking way the Nez Perce enhanced the beauty of their horses.

The Nez Perce were horse rich, having acquired this "miracle animal" over a century earlier from trade with the Shoshone. Once horses were brought back to Nez Perce country, they were selectively bred for the best short-legged stock that could endure long trips up and down the mountainous terrain of their traditional homeland. In time, these horses would be given the name of "Appaloosa," often distinguished by their coat pattern with sprinkles of white or large dark spots on lighter bodies.

I sculpted the thirty foot tall monument of Chief Washakie for the University of Wyoming during his famous battle against the Crow Chief Big Robber for the rights to stay in the Wind River Valley of Wyoming. This very important part of Wyoming's history known as "The Battle at Crow Heart Butte", was won by Chief Washakie. He rode an appaloosa war horse that was a gift from Chief Joseph and always gave much of the credit for his victory to the powerful war horse he rode that historical day. The friendship between Chief Joseph and Washakie was the source of inspiration for this sculpture.

Chief Joseph holds a tomahawk used in battle that was decorated with brass tacks obtained through trade. Attached to the tomahawk is a trailer with beautiful bead work and fringe. The tomahawk and the Winchester rifle were his weapons of choice. His Winchester is in a beautiful beaded scabbard over his shoulder. The Winchester was the most desired weapon of choice by all warriors. Chief Joseph offered his rifle to General Howard upon his surrender at the Battle of Bear Paw.

His long hair, braided and wrapped in otter fur was common with Chief Joseph. He wears many strands of trade beads as a necklace along with two strands of brass trade beads. This necklace was almost always a part of Chief Joseph's regalia during his years as the leader of the Nez Perce.

Standing with great pride as a guardian of the elders and of the children, Chief Joseph after discovering a large group of his people fled to safety in Canada, to be with Chief Sitting Bull, made the decision to stay behind to secure the safety of his people. He then gave one of the most unforgettable speeches in American History:

*"I am tired of fighting.
Hear me, my chiefs. I am
tired. My heart is sick and
sad. From where the sun now
stands, I will fight no more
forever."*

— Chief Joseph

