I Will Fight No More Forever Study Guide

I Will Fight No More Forever by Chief Joseph

Contents

Introduction

"I Will Fight No More Forever" is the name given to the speech made by Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce on October 5, 1877, when the Nez Perce were forced to surrender to Colonel Nelson Miles and General O. O. Howard after the Battle of the Bear Paw Mountains. General Howard led the U.S. soldiers who, for over four months, had chased the Nez Perce—men, women, and children—from their native lands in the Wallowa Valley of eastern Oregon toward Canada. Colonel Miles came to the general's aid when it looked as though the Nez Perce might escape. Chief Joseph gave his speech to the general's adjutant (administrative staff officer), but it was also documented by journalists who had been following the progress of the Nez Perce retreat. It appeared in printed form in the November 17, 1877 issue of the magazine *Harper's Weekly*. Only sixteen sentences long, the speech is almost poetic in its simple brevity.

In a speech given in 1879, quoted in *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492–1992*, edited by Peter Nabokov, Chief Joseph described the Wallowa Valley where he had grown up, and where his father and other ancestors were buried, as "that beautiful valley of winding waters" that he loved "more than all the rest of the world." The valley remained safe from white encroachment until the middle of the nineteenth century, when a series of unfavorable treaties gradually shrank the Nez Perce territories. Although U.S. government officials promised to protect the heart of the Nez Perce lands from white settlement, in the spring of 1877 they broke this promise, demanding that the Nez Perce leave. Chief Joseph worked to avoid violence during the preparations for departure; however, a series of violent skirmishes broke out between incoming whites and some of the Nez Perce. The military responded but unsuccessfully fought against the Indians in the first battle of what came to be known as the Nez Perce War. The military called in reinforcements, and they pursued the Nez Perce for more than one thousand miles. The war ended with Chief Joseph's surrender that fall, but his struggle to return his people to their land was not yet over. For many years, living in exile, he continued to use his great skills as an orator and statesman to explain the history of relations between the natives and the colonists in the Northwest United States and to ask for justice and the return of the Wallowa Valley. He and his people were never allowed to return.

Although Chief Joseph was not himself a warlord, his surrender speech solidified his place in the minds of Americans as a powerful Indian leader—for a long time many believed he was the one who had led the greatly outnumbered Nez Perce in a series of military victories against the U.S. army. In actuality, Chief Joseph was a spokesman for and caretaker of his people, not a military leader. In his surrender speech, for instance, he focuses on the Nez Perce people's lack of food and blankets, and his desire to locate the children who had been lost during the fighting.

Author Biography

Chief Joseph, also known as Hinmahtohyahlatkekt (which has been translated as Thunder Rolling Down the Mountain, or Thunder Coming Up Over the Land From the Water), was born in 1840, the second son of a Nez Perce chief, Old Joseph.

In 1877, when the U.S. military forced Chief Joseph's people off their lands in the Wallowa Valley of eastern Oregon, Chief Joseph helped to lead some seven hundred and fifty men, women, and children on a seventeen-hundred-mile fighting retreat toward Canada. In October of that year, Chief Joseph and those remaining Nez Perce were forced to surrender after intense fighting in the Bear Paw Mountains in Montana, fewer than forty miles south of the Canadian border. There, he gave his now-famous surrender speech.

Chief Joseph and approximately four hundred Nez Perce Indians were taken captive and moved to Oklahoma and Kansas, where they were held for almost eight years. During that time, Chief Joseph went to Washington and addressed U.S. leaders, asking that they honor the original terms of his surrender and that they allow his people to return to their lands in the West. Eventually, Chief Joseph and the small number of remaining Nez Perce were returned to the Northwest—to reservations in western Idaho and eastern Washington—but they were never allowed to reclaim their Wallowa Valley lands. Chief Joseph died on September 21, 1904, on the Colville Reservation in northeastern Washington.

Chief Joseph's speech came at the end of a long and costly struggle for the tribe. First, they had defended their lands from the encroachment of white settlers, and then, once that failed, they had defended themselves from military attack as they tried to make their way to safety in Canada. When first published, "I Will Fight No More Forever" played an important role in challenging stereotypes about Indians as savage primitives. Today, Chief Joseph's words are well known for expressing dignity and courage in the face of terrible losses.

"I Will Fight No More Forever" is a significant document in the history of relations between Indians and whites in the nineteenth century, as it records the hardships Joseph and his people—and countless other Native American groups—endured, including broken treaties, violence, and ultimately, the loss of their homelands.

Plot Summary

In his surrender speech, "I Will Fight No More Forever," Chief Joseph confesses his own exhaustion and offers a list of the hardships that have befallen his people while attempting to escape the U.S. army. They had traveled as many as seventeen hundred miles, hoping to find refuge with Sitting Bull, the Sioux chief, who brought his people to Canada to escape U.S. aggression. Chief Joseph gave the speech in early October after the Battle of the Bear Paw Mountains. Winter had come, and the Nez Perce were suffering from freezing weather, lack of food, and exhaustion from the prolonged travel and fighting.

Chief Joseph begins by telling the adjutant, Major H. Clay Wood, that he is surrendering with General Howard's promises at heart. As Colin Taylor explains in "Plateau and Basin," Howard had told Chief Joseph that the Nez Perce would be allowed to return to the Lapwai Reservation in Idaho, rather than being forcefully relocated to reservations in "Indian Territory"—Oklahoma and Kansas. A common fate for Indians who had been forced off their lands, "Indian Territory" was hot, windy, and inhospitable. It was thousands of miles from and completely unlike the Nez Perce homeland. The federal government, as it turned out, did not honor the conditions of the surrender and kept the captured Nez Perce in the Midwest for almost a decade. Many of those who had survived the battles and flight, including several of Chief Joseph's children, died there of disease.

In his speech, Chief Joseph mentions the names of two prominent leaders who fell during battle: Looking Glass and Toohoolhoolzote. Looking Glass was one of the principal war leaders for the fleeing group of Nez Perce. Before joining Chief Joseph and the others, he was the leader of a band of Nez Perce living along the Kooskia (now Clearwater) River. He was younger than Chief Joseph and was probably more eager to go into battle. Chief Joseph was not a military leader as much as he was a statesman and caretaker. According to Taylor, before the war, Looking Glass was well known for his wide-ranging travels, taking his people farther east and north than many of his fellow chiefs and forging bonds with neighboring groups of Indians. Toohoolhoolzote was another Nez Perce war chief. He and his people had lived along the lower Salmon River prior to the conflict with the whites.

Because the leaders of the bands have been killed, and many of the older and wiser Nez Perce are dead, Chief Joseph says in his speech that now the young and less experienced men are left to make decisions—that is, they are the ones who "say yes and no." He also seems to imply that the power to make such choices places too much responsibility on the young. Although he does not comment on this, he thus implies that poor and impulsive decisions were being made without sufficient leadership. Tribes like the Nez Perce were traditionally run by a council of elders who made decisions together. With the deaths of Looking Glass and Toohoolhoolzote, Chief Joseph was left without fellow elders with whom to lead the tribe.

Chief Joseph refers to his "lost children." Among the children who died during the arduous journey north was one of Chief Joseph's own daughters, but this phrase may also refer to his tribes people more broadly, as he was responsible for the women, children, and elderly Nez Perce. As his speech suggests, the casualties to the group were great: they began with nearly seven hundred and fifty members and by the time of surrender, only about four hundred remained. (Although Chief Joseph may not have known it at the time, as many as one hundred and fifty Nez Perce had escaped through the final battle lines, eventually making their way to Canada under the leadership of Chief White Bird.) Having crossed the Bitterroot Mountains, the Missouri River, and the Rocky Mountains, twice, at the onset of winter, the Nez Perce were weakened by exposure and starvation. In the final battle of the war, Colonel Miles launched a surprise attack in the midst of a snowstorm. Joseph's brother, Ollokot, died during this battle. Some of the women and children in the Nez Perce camp tried to escape the fighting by running out into the storm. Chief Joseph needed a truce in order to search the battlefields and hillsides for those who remained alive.

At the conclusion of his speech, Joseph addresses his chiefs, those who have gone before him, and those who have recently died. "Chiefs" may also refer to the leadership of the U.S. army, specifically Generals Howard and Miles. In this part of the speech Chief Joseph's humanity as a leader becomes especially apparent. He describes his heart as "sick and sad" and admits that he cannot fight any longer, and that he will never fight again. The speech clearly expresses how terrible a loss it is for him to be unable to fulfill his duty completely and preserve his lands and his people, despite every conceivable effort on his part.

In truth, however, Chief Joseph did not stop fighting. Although he never again was involved in armed conflict, he did not stop using the skill for which he was best known—his ability to speak clearly and convincingly about Native American conditions—as a means of fighting against prejudice, misconception, and injustice.

Themes

Oppression and Genocide

The history of contact between the Indians and the whites from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries is often considered in terms of a genocidal war carried out against the Native Americans. After the arrival of the whites, native populations were drastically reduced, some groups disappearing forever. They were killed by diseases brought to the New World by Europeans, including, as Alice B. Kehoe describes in *North American Indians: A Comprehensive Account*, smallpox, measles, and whooping cough. Some of these diseases were accidentally transmitted—by contact with fur trappers, traders, and settlers. Others were spread deliberately by the whites, in contaminated blankets, for instance, as an early form of biological warfare. Native American populations were also greatly damaged by armed attacks and the ills that resulted from forced relocation, including starvation, exposure, and disease.

"I Will Fight No More Forever" documents this long and violent struggle between Euro-Americans and Native Americans for the lands and resources of North America. It emphasizes the oppression of the Nez Perce by the U.S. government and its military, eventually resulting in the displacement and death of the Indians. Chief Joseph lists those who have fallen during their flight toward Canada; they include not only warriors like Looking Glass and Toohoolhoolzote, but also children and elders. While a conventional war might seek to spare civilians, such as the very young and the very old, the war against the Indians did not. It was aimed at destroying the cultural and military leaders—the "old men" and chiefs to which Joseph refers—as well as the future generations of American Indians.

In Chief Joseph's brief statement, the words "dead," "death," or "killed" appear in eight places. It was not the fighting alone that cost lives. Conditions for the Nez Perce were worsened by the onset of winter and the necessity of abandoning supplies to speed their flight. Chief Joseph describes how he and his people have no food or blankets, and how "the little children are freezing to death." Expressing the exhaustion of his people, he describes himself as tired, sick, and sad of heart. According to Francis Drake in *Indian History For Young Folks*, General Sherman said of the Nez Perce: "Throughout this extraordinary campaign, the Indians displayed a courage and skill that elicited universal praise. They abstained from scalping, let captive women go free, [and] did not murder indiscriminately." The same could not be said of the U.S. troops. They waged a war of all-out terror, killing forty children and women in one battle alone, as governmental policy at that time refused to set limits on the aggression that the United States waged against the Indians.

Survival

In the face of a sorrowful defeat and confronted with the possibility of a forced march away from his homeland, or even execution, Chief Joseph emphasizes his weariness with fighting, but not with survival. He asks for "time to look for [his] children and see how many [he] can find." Chief Joseph wishes to search for survivors among his fellow Nez Perce, to regroup, and to protect his remaining people. Although they were finally overcome, the long flight of the Nez Perce was a testament to their resilience and their desire for survival. By making a public statement witnessed by journalists as well as members of the military, Chief Joseph brought attention to the plight of the Nez Perce, and Native Americans in general, and produced a document that would survive long after his death and the return of the Nez Perce to the Northwest. His dignity in surrender so impressed onlookers that even the white military leaders felt compelled to respect Chief Joseph. Later, some of these leaders would advocate on his behalf, and on the behalf of all the Nez Perce, in Washington, D.C.

Chief Joseph's eloquence suggests not just the survival but also the strength of a long tradition of oratory (speech making) in Nez Perce culture, as well as a tradition of respect for the chiefs of earlier generations. His speech closes with an address to these former leaders: "Hear me, my chiefs." Ultimately, surrender itself was a bid for survival as well, since the alternative would likely have been the extermination of Chief Joseph's people.

Heroes and Leaders

Chief Joseph speaks formally to the U.S. leaders, reminding them of General Howard's terms for surrender by saying he has kept them "in his heart." Although he is the one surrendering, by beginning his speech this way he emphasizes the responsibilities the victors have to fulfill their promises. This indicates Chief Joseph has considered the terms and found them better than the alternative of certain death. By the speech's closing, however, it is obvious that this address is intended as much for the Nez Perce themselves, and their own fallen leaders, as it is for their opponents.

Addressing "his chiefs," Chief Joseph acknowledges his place in a network of Nez Perce leaders who make decisions collectively and share joint responsibility for the welfare of their people. Now that so many of the chiefs are dead, Chief Joseph must make decisions alone, and he must accept responsibility for his decisions. Interestingly, he does not surrender to General Howard; that is, he does not tell General Howard he will fight no more. He tells this to his fellow, and fallen, leaders, demonstrating that his greatest responsibility is to them, his own people, and even to the chiefs who remained buried on Nez Perce lands far behind them, including Chief Joseph's father.

In his speech, Chief Joseph refers to "the young men who say yes and no" and the fact that "he who led on the young men is dead." The leader of the young men to whom Joseph refers was probably Ollokot, Joseph's younger brother, or possibly Looking Glass, a chief known for his assertive battle strategies. Without a leader, the young are

left to make decisions—a potentially dangerous situation, since they lack the experience and perspective of the older men "who are all dead." If it is the young men who are making decisions now ("saying no and yes") among the Nez Perce, perhaps Chief Joseph's speech is also designed to explain to them how dire the conditions of their people are and why they should stop fighting now, rather than carrying on until every Nez Perce is dead.

Although Chief Joseph speaks only of his sadness and weariness, his strength as a leader is clear even in the few lines of his surrender statement. In fact, because the speech was so strong, and perhaps because he was one of the few mature Nez Perce leaders still living, many listeners and later readers assumed he was a battle hero as well as a spokesman for the Nez Perce. Chief Joseph's power as a leader came not from his strength in battle but from his compassion for his people and his ability to articulate this. He demonstrates this by his repeated references to the Nez Perce children in his speech, as well as his references to the old and young men who have fallen or who need assistance. He expresses worry that those who have fled to the mountains will die of starvation or exposure, and he wants to be able to rescue them.

Throughout the course of his life, Chief Joseph's leadership was expressed both in his concern for the well-being of his people and his dogged struggle against an abusive government, earning him a reputation as a hero for later generations of Native Americans.

Historical Context

The Nez Perce

"Nez Perce" is the name given to a group of Native American peoples who traditionally occupied the plateau regions of the Northwest—eastern Oregon and Washington, and western Idaho. Nez Perce means "Pierced Nose" in French and refers to an early tradition, reported by French fur trappers, of some members of the tribe to wear shell ornaments in their noses. As the National Geographic book *Indians of the Americas* points out, though, there is some question about whether this practice actually existed among the Nez Perce. Europeans often mistook one group of American Indians for another.

The Nez Perce were skilled in hunting and salmon fishing as well as weaving, and lived a semi-migratory life—traveling as far as Wyoming and Montana for hunting and trade. The range of their travels broadened with the introduction of the horse, probably in the mid-eighteenth century, according to Kehoe in *North American Indians: A Comprehensive Account*. The Nez Perce were well known for their skill in horse breeding and their sizeable herds. As Taylor explains in "Plateau and Basin," they were the first to develop the breed of horse known as the Appaloosa. Like many other American Indian peoples of the Northwest and the plains, their way of life depended upon access to rivers and broad, open hunting and gathering grounds. They felt a deep connection to the lands on which their people had been living for thousands of years.

Although skilled horsemen and bow-makers, the Nez Perce tended to have relatively peaceful relations among themselves and their neighbors. As Chief Joseph points out in his address to Congress in 1879, relations between the Nez Perce and whites had not always been hostile. In fact, in 1806, the famous explorers Lewis and Clark passed through Nez Perce lands and were greeted warmly, forming, in Taylor's words, "the basis of particularly friendly relations between the Nez Perce and Americans in the years to come."

The Nez Perce were also among the first Native Americans to seek out information about Christianity (unlike many groups upon whom it had been imposed unwillingly). They hoped, according to Kehoe, that Christian healers would be able to help them cure, or develop immunities to, the diseases that had arrived with the whites. Chief Joseph's father was a Christian convert for a while, but he later renounced the religion. The missionaries who came to Nez Perce territories promoted the English language as well as their religion. They also attempted to impose European ideas about law, criminal punishment, and family structure. By writing about the beauty of the region, the missionaries encouraged immigration to the area by other whites.

As more and more white settlers and government officials came into the Northwest in the nineteenth century, they tended to regard all the Nez Perce as one centrally governed people. In fact, they were a community of separate bands, each with its own

lands and its own leadership. This was just one of many misconceptions about Nez Perce culture, but it would have far-reaching negative consequences for the Indians. U.S. officials enforced treaties signed by individual chiefs onto all Nez Perce peoples, even when their own leaders had not agreed to the government's terms. Ultimately, a conflation of this kind cost Chief Joseph and his people their beloved Wallowa Valley.

In 1855, the Nez Perce gave up as much as sixty-thousand square miles of their land to the U.S. government in exchange to remain on some part of their ancestral territory, according to James A. Maxwell in *America's Fascinating Indian Heritage*. But while white encroachment affected the lives of many neighboring groups, Chief Joseph's band of Nez Perce maintained the rights to their valley and lived in relative isolation there. The discovery of gold on their lands in the early 1860s, however, sounded the death-knell of their autonomy and the protection of their lands from white settlers.

As the Bureau of Indian Affairs recounts in *Famous Indians: A Collection of Short Biographies*, in 1863 another chief, Chief Lawyer, made an agreement with the government, giving up a portion of his lands when Joseph would not. Although the U.S. government recognized the rights of Chief Joseph's people to their lands in the 1855 treaty, gold prospectors either did not know about or did not honor the government's decision. They flooded into the Wallowa. Frictions between the newcomers and the tribes-people mounted. Taylor describes how Chief Lawyer's agreement to the 1863 treaty gave officials a way of ignoring the terms of the earlier treaty: the U.S. government now claimed that the treaty applied to all the Nez Perce. In 1868 Joseph was forced to sign an agreement allowing the Wallowa to be opened for homesteading —which, under the Homestead Act of 1862, allowed any new settlers to claim up to one hundred and sixty acres of land each—though the Nez Perce still lived on it. As described in *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492–1992*, it would be the last of three hundred and seventy-four treaties between the U.S. government and Native Americans.

For years Chief Joseph tried to prevent violence between his people and the whites, all the while petitioning the government to honor its own 1855 treaty and protect the Nez Perce lands. Although Taylor reports that some white officials, including Nez Perce Agent John Monteith and Major H. Clay Wood, felt the Nez Perce had been unjustly deprived of their land, in 1877, the U.S. government demanded that the Nez Perce leave the Wallowa Valley and Oregon altogether.

The Nez Perce War

Chief Joseph tried to prepare his people for departure as peacefully as possible, despite the fact that they were given only thirty days to remove themselves to Idaho. Their military escort was heavily armed, and Chief Joseph wanted no violence. An unfortunate series of events led, however, to all-out fighting: by some accounts, a Nez Perce man was killed by white settlers, and according to other sources, a significant number of Nez Perce horses were stolen. While Chief Joseph counseled against seeking vengeance, a small group of Nez Perce men entered a white settlement and killed a number of whites.

The military responded against the Nez Perce but, to its surprise, was soundly defeated at the Battle of White Bird Canyon on June 17, 1877. Chief Joseph felt the Nez Perce had been baited into an unwanted war.

The Battle of White Bird Canyon began a violent conflict that would include more than a dozen subsequent battles. Ranging over more than seventeen hundred miles of ground, Joseph and approximately seven hundred and fifty Nez Perce (only about two hundred and fifty of whom could have been considered warriors—the rest women, children, and elders) moved eastward and to the north, consistently outmaneuvering the military. In response to the initial U.S. loss, Taylor relates how General Howard mustered "four companies of cavalry, six of infantry, and five of artillery" and supplied them with howitzer cannons. Over the next four months, these forces chased and attacked the Nez Perce, even launching surprise attacks at night and massacring women and children where they slept. The Nez Perce, abandoning property and supplies, persisted in their flight; again and again they escaped, held the military off, and even won battles using both rifles and bows and arrows.

Although the Nez Perce managed to outrun their pursuers, fresh troops were sent to intercept them. On September 30, 1877, only forty miles from the Canadian border, U.S. troops launched a surprise attack against the Indians in the midst of a snowstorm. Although they pressed the army back, most of the Indian's horses were captured, ending their hopes of escape. Only about one hundred Nez Perce warriors remained (at least one hundred women and children were also dead), and General Howard's forces were catching up. It was in these conditions, and with General Howard's promise that the Nez Perce would be allowed to remain in the Northwest, that Chief Joseph surrendered.

Indian Statesmanship

As David Beurge discusses in "Chief Seattle and Chief Joseph: From Indians to Icons," Chief Joseph is one of the most well-known Native American spokesmen. Both his surrender speech and his Washington address are famous for their eloquence and strength. Some attribute Chief Joseph's skill with words (and the skillful oratory of other American Indian leaders) to their oral traditions; that is, their experience in the art of verbal rather than written communication. While the native language of the Nez Perce was not written, many Nez Perce were comfortable with several American Indian languages—and Chief Joseph had experience with English because his father learned it from the missionaries. He was clearly comfortable with the language and spoke with the "formal gravity and deep conviction" that Fred Turner in *The Portable North American Indian Reader* says characterized Native American discourse at its best.

Critical Overview

From the time of its delivery in 1877, Chief Joseph's surrender speech has been praised for its poignancy and dignity. By all accounts, it is one of the most famous Native American speeches ever documented. According to Colin Taylor in "Plateau and Basin," "Joseph's final answer summed up the desperate experiences and now the plight of the remnant Nez Perce, its poignancy, eloquence, and dignity being a remarkable tribute for all time to the people that he represented." Taylor also considers the speech "the end of an era"—the end of freedom and of fighting for the Nez Perce.

According to David Buerge in "Chief Seattle and Chief Joseph: From Indians to Icons," Chief Joseph's speech "made him the symbol of Nez Perce heroism and resistance." When published, it raised awareness and sympathy among many readers for the plight of the Indians. The military leaders who had dealt with Joseph spoke of how much they admired him, and Colonel Miles, when he became General Miles, urged the U.S. government to listen to Chief Joseph and allow the Nez Perce to return to the Northwest. Today it is valued both for its emotional impact—describing the searing injustices committed against Native Americans during the nineteenth century—and for Chief Joseph's clarity and power with words.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2

Critical Essay #1

In the following historical excerpt, Harper's Weekly *recounts the events that led to the surrender of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce tribe*.

I Will Fight No More Forever (1975), the story of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce, was adapted as a film by Richard T. Heffron. Starring James Whitmore, Sam Elliott, Ned Romero, and Nick Ramus, it is available on video from Anchor Bay Entertainment.

On September 30 Colonel MILES made a sudden attack on the enemy, whose camp was situated on a bench or flat in the creek bottom. The Indians occupied the crests of the surrounding hills, and repulsed the charge made on the right by three companies of the Seventh Cavalry. A line of dead horses marked the course of the charge; and the loss, either killed or wounded, of every commissioned officer but one, of every first sergeant, and many non-commissioned officers, told how coolly it was received. The lower sketch on page 905 shows the advance of the skirmish line. The men dismounted, tied their lariats round the left arm, and led their horses. Whenever a soldier stopped a moment, his horse would quietly graze—a strange sight on a battlefield! The Indians were finally forced to abandon their camp and to occupy the adjacent ravines, which were well protected from the fire, and which they honey-combed with pits and bomb-proofs: The Nez Percés occupied and held the crests on the north immediately overlooking their own position. Things remained in this condition until the surrender.

The same bugler who sounded "To the charge!" on the 30th, trumpeting the death-call of so many brave fellows, now blew the calming and welcome call of "Cease firing". The effect on the Indian camp was almost instantaneous. Where, a moment before, not a head was to be seen nor any sign of life, the ravines now swarmed with people, and little children capered in the sunshine and laughed in the face of death. They seemed to be the swarthy children of the earth, born in a moment, cast forth as if by magic.

General Howard arrived on October 4, bringing with him his two herders, "Captain John" and "George", friendly Nez Percés. Both these men had daughters in the hostile camp. Captain John is a friend of long standing to the whites. He fought by the side of Steptoe, and helped him during his retreat. One parley with Joseph, held on the 2d of October, had been unsuccessful; but after much discussion with the chief, old Captain John, with tears in his eyes, announced the surrender as concluded by Joseph's final reply.

Our artist was the only person present who committed the proceedings to writing, and took the reply as it fell from the lips of the speaker. Joseph's little girl was lost in the hills during the first day's fight, his brother was killed, his relatives dead or fugitives; he upheld now only a lost cause. His answer was: "Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed; Looking Glass is dead, Ta- hoolhoolshute is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say 'Yes' or 'No.' He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them,

have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe shall find them among the dead. 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."

Attended by five warriors, he on horseback, they on foot, Joseph rode slowly up the hill, where General Howard and Colonel Miles stood to receive him. His hands were crossed on the pommel of the saddle, and his head was bowed upon his breast. After receiving him, General Howard and Colonel Miles mounted their horses, and accompanied the chief to Miles's tent.

Source: Anonymous, "The Surrender of Joseph," in *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. 21, No. 1090, November 17, 1877, p. 906.

Critical Essay #2

Gillard is a lecturer on English literature and writing. In this essay, Gillard asserts that cultural differences between the Nez Perce and the United States military led to the misinterpretation of Chief Joseph's "I Will Fight No More Forever" speech.

Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekt (which means Thunder Rolling in the Mountains) of the Wallowa band of the Nimiipu is known to most Euro-Americans as Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce tribe. Chief Joseph delivered a now-famous surrender speech, named for its last line, at the end of a long, bloody retreat from United States Army forces. The Nez Perce had been driven from their homeland in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, and after traveling through Wyoming and Montana, they were attempting to reach a place beyond the jurisdiction of the army: Canada. It was at Bear Paw Mountain in northern Montana, forty miles short of the Canadian border, that the United States Army finally caught up to what remained of the Nez Perce band and secured their surrender.

Chief Joseph, the only surviving leader of the Nez Perce, addressed his surrender speech to the American military commanders present, General O. O. Howard and Colonel Nelson Miles. Importantly, what Chief Joseph meant to communicate and what the Americans chose to hear were two different messages. The misunderstanding was hardly limited to that Montana exchange. Throughout the United States, the plight of the Nez Perce had become a *cause célèbre*, or a popular issue to support. The misunderstanding of Chief Joseph's surrender illustrates the larger cultural context: Euro-American and Nez Perce societal institutions, with the former hierarchical and authoritarian, and the latter collaborative and liberal, clashed to a degree that caused serious problems for both sides of the conflict.

Chief Joseph carefully constructed his statement, which expressed not only his surrender—an undoubtedly heartbreaking decision—but also his anger and sadness. Although the message was delivered by a translator to Colonel Miles and General Howard, at least part of it was directed toward Joseph's fellow Nez Perce: the assertion that to continue fighting would be worse than to surrender. Chief Joseph, after all, believed that, upon surrender, the original terms of the previous Nez Perce treaty would still be in effect. He would give up the fight, and the independence of the Nez Perce nation, in exchange for peaceful removal to a reservation.

Merrill Beal's account of the Nez Perce flight, *"I Will Fight No More Forever": Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce War*, contains Chief Joseph's speech. The first part reads:

Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our Chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. The old men are all killed. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led the young men is dead.

Decision-making, even when the Nez Perce were fleeing across Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana, was a diversified process. Any decisions that affected the entire group were made not by a single chief, as some white people expected, but by a

council of elders composed of men such as Joseph, Looking Glass, Toohulhulsote, Naked Head, and others. These were men who had acquired the wisdom of older age. Although white people referred to the Indians in question as a single tribe called the Nez Perce, they were, in reality, separate bands with distinct hierarchies and traditions. Nevertheless, they shared resources, bonded through marriage, and defended their common interests. Although United States military and government officials saw Chief Joseph as the single leader of all Nez Perce, he led only one small band of Nez Perce known as the Wallowa. Therefore, he lacked the authority to make decisions that affected anyone other than his Wallowa family and followers. With Chief Joseph's band at Bear Paw Mountain were leaders of at least three other bands of Nez Perce: Toohulhulsote, Looking Glass, and White Bird. Along with Chief Joseph, these leaders shared the greatest responsibility for decision-making among the Nez Perce.

With the phrase "Looking Glass is dead," Chief Joseph uses the death of a significant elder of the Nez Perce as an important justification for surrender. Allalimya Takanin, who took his father's name, Looking Glass, after his father's death, was the leader of the Asotin, the Middle Fork of the Clearwater band of the Nez Perce. He had been among the last people killed at Bear Paw Mountain. Critical to the Nez Perce war effort, Looking Glass was reputed to be the central military planner and strategist among the Nez Perce. His death severely hurt Nez Perce efforts to escape from the overwhelming military force of the United States Army. Losing such a leader at that point, Chief Joseph knew, made escape to Canada almost impossible.

Toohulhulsote's death is Chief Joseph's next justification for surrender. Toohulhulsote, also known as Dreamer, was the leader of the Snake River band of Nez Perce. He was a "non-treaty" chief; that is, he refused to relinquish his band's ancestral homeland when commanded to do so by the United States government. When Toohulhulsote spoke to General Howard in succinct terms about the nature of the conflict with the Americans, the Nez Perce leader said (as quoted in Beal): "We never made any trade. Part of the Indians gave up their land. I never did. The earth is part of my body, and I never gave up the earth."

When both Toohulhulsote and Looking Glass were killed in the same battle, the Nez Perce determination to fight was broken. The line, "The old men are all killed," emphasizes this point. An understanding of Nez Perce culture reveals the importance of this statement: without the "old men," the bands lack the experience of their leaders and the collective efforts of their decision-makers. In the next line, when Chief Joseph says, "He who led the young men is dead," he does not mention the leader by name. Perhaps the statement was too difficult for him to make: according to writer and historian Candy Moulton, the leader of the young men was Chief Joseph's younger brother and closest confidant, Ollocot. With the council of elders shattered, Chief Joseph had no one to share in the deliberation process. The young were not traditionally to be trusted or burdened with the decision-making power. In addition, the young warriors had endured the bulk of the violence in the cross-country flight. By the time the Nez Perce reached Bear Paw Mountain, most who remained were women, children, and old people. There were few left to fight.

The second section of the surrender speech underscores the enormous hardship endured by the Nez Perce during their flight from the U.S. Army:

It is cold, and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are, perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead.

Chief Joseph justifies his decision to surrender by telling of the hardship the band has endured. Truly, they pushed themselves—and were pushed—beyond their limits. In this section of the speech, he evokes sympathy, perhaps in an effort to chastise his pursuers. The second section also makes it clear that Chief Joseph is speaking only for himself, and not for every member of the Nez Perce at Bear Paw Mountain. In this section, Chief Joseph gives his most personal rationale for giving up the fight. It speaks not only to the hardships the Nez Perce had endured up to that point, but also to the continuing peril he saw for his people as a snowy October began in the mountains of Montana. When he mentions his "children," he refers not only to the young of the entire band, but also to his biological children in particular. At Bear Paw Mountain, at least one of Joseph's children was close by his side: as the battle began, Joseph ordered his daughter, twelve-year-old Sound of Running Water, to flee on horseback with the others who had escaped while he remained behind to fight. Understandably, he was concerned for her well-being and for the well-being of the rest of his band.

The final section of the surrender speech can be seen as addressing both the army officials and his own people: "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." Joseph's exhortation to his "Chiefs" is consistent with how he might address both the army commanders and the elders of his own band. Personal concerns are central in these last four sentences. By saying, "I am tired. My heart is sad and sick," he is unmistakably giving a singular surrender. Chief Joseph's intention seemed to be to speak only for those under his care: the sick, the aged, the young, and the members of his Wallowa band. Unfortunately, when White Bird, an elder who chose not to surrender along with Chief Joseph, led his band of fifty followers under cover of darkness to Canada, General Howard declared the surrender agreement null and void. Because Howard did not understand the nature of Nez Perce decision-making, he interpreted the flight of White Bird and his followers as a breach of the agreement. Because of this misunderstanding, he assumed Chief Joseph's surrender applied to the entire tribe. And from Chief Joseph's perspective, Howard's apparent change of heart was part of a larger problem with the American government.

Howard and Miles were not alone in misinterpreting Nez Perce culture. The flight of the bands across the West became a media event, with daily updates printed in newspapers across the United States. Again and again, mass media accounts labeled the conflict as "Joseph's War" and mistakenly turned it into a battle of personalities. Euro-American governing structure—one leader, many followers—did not hold sway in Nez Perce culture. Moreover, according to Beal, the conflict over the meaning of Joseph's surrender continued among General Howard and his superiors, Generals

Sherman and Sheridan. Beal writes, "Contrary to Howard's expectations, events had revealed that there was not enough glory in Joseph's surrender to go around." Howard was disappointed that public interest in "Joseph's War" did not translate into personal fame for Joseph's conqueror.

Contrary to Chief Joseph's expectations, the Nez Perce were not allowed to go to the reservation promised to them in Idaho. Instead, the American government forced them to move repeatedly across the Midwest, until they were finally settled in Oklahoma, hundreds of miles from home. After his surrender, a bitter Chief Joseph, exhausted after many months of failed efforts to convince the American government to deal justly with the Nez Perce, was in Washington, D.C., to meet with leaders in the American government. In a statement reprinted in Harvey Chalmers II's *The Last Stand of the Nez Perce: Destruction of a People*, Chief Joseph addressed the government's failure to follow through with the agreement at Bear Paw Mountain:

I could not bear to see my wounded men and women suffer any longer. We had lost enough already. Colonel Miles had promised that we might return to our own country with what stock we had left. I thought we could start again. I believed Colonel Miles or I never would have surrendered. I have heard that he has been censured for making the promise to return us to Lapwai. He could not have made any other terms with me at that time. I would have held him in check until my friends came to my assistance. Then neither of their soldiers would have left Bear Paw Mountain alive.

Although deeply angry that the American government did not live up to terms that had been agreed upon, Chief Joseph nevertheless kept the promise he made in his surrender speech. He campaigned peacefully, but never again took up arms to fight for the Nez Perce cause.

Source: Bill Gillard, Critical Essay on "I Will Fight No More Forever," in *Literary Themes for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2006.

Bibliography

Beal, Merrill, *I Will Fight No More Forever: Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce War*, University Press of Washington, 1963, pp. 41, 229, 233.

Buerge, David M., "Chief Seattle and Chief Joseph: From Indians to Icons," *The University of Washington*, content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/buerge2.html (August 17, 2005).

Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Famous Indians: A Collection of Short Biographies*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974, pp. 38-39.

Chalmers II, Harvey, *The Last Stand of the Nez Perce: Destruction of a People*, Twayne, 1962, pp. 218-19.

Drake, Francis S., *Indian History for Young Folks*, Harper & Brothers, 1885, p. 467.

Indians of the Americas, National Geographic Society, 1955, p. 130.

Joseph, Chief of the Nez Perce, "An Indian's View of Indian Affairs," in the *North American Review*, Vol. 128, January-July 1879, pp. 412-34.

————————, "I Will Fight No More Forever," in *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492–1992*, edited by Peter Nabokov, Viking, 1991, pp. 180-81.

Kehoe, Alice B., *North American Indians: A Comprehensive Account*, Prentice Hall, 1981, pp. 358-64.

Maxwell, James A., *America's Fascinating Indian Heritage*, Reader's Digest Association, 1978, p. 287.

Moulton, Candy, *Chief Joseph: Guardian of the People*, Forge, 2005, pp. 190-91.

Nabokov, Peter, ed., *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492–1992*, Viking, 1991, pp. 119, 129-33, 180-81.

Taylor, Colin F., "Plateau and Basin," in *The Native Americans*, Colin F. Taylor, ed., Salamander Books, 1991, pp. 102, 109-13, 116, 127.

"The Surrender of Joseph," *The University of Washington*, content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/surrenderofjoseph.html (June 6, 2005); originally published in *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. 21, No. 1090, November 17, 1877.

Turner, Frederick, ed., *The Portable North American Indian Reader*, Penguin, 1974, p. 237.

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Novels for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's"For Students" Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on "classic" novels frequently

studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of "classic" novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members—educational professionals— helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed—for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man–the character is listed as "The Narrator" and alphabetized as "Narrator." If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. • Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name "Jean Louise Finch" would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname "Scout Finch."
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an “at-a-glance” comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author’s time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes “The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,” a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children’s Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

“Night.” Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234–35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the “Criticism” subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on “Winesburg, Ohio.” Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335–39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. “Margaret Atwood’s “The Handmaid’s Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,” Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9–16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133–36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. “Richard Wright: “Wearing the Mask,” in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69–83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59–61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Novels for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331–3535