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Chief Joseph & the Flight of the Nez Perce, by Kent Nerburn, Harper One, 2005

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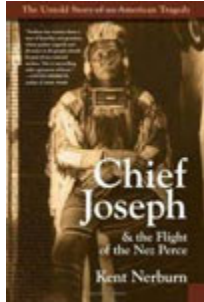
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Recommended Readings



Chief Joseph & the Flight of the Nez Perce

by Kent Nerburn, Harper One, 2005

Reviewed by Richard McGowan

Chief Joseph and the Flight of the Nez Perce confirms why, as a matter of respect, I visited Chief Joseph's grave years ago. Kent Nerburn has captured the dignity, heart, and person of Chief Joseph, whom the NY Times called the 'noblest Indian of them all,' in telling the story of the famous Nez Perce flight from the U.S. military's might. Thus, the book both inspires its reader to kindness as it makes that same reader's blood boil.

How an, ill-equipped band of Nez Perce could outsmart, outmaneuver, and outfight the well-provisioned army sent after it is a story worth reading. How the United States government and its representatives betrayed trust and promise during the Indian Wars, so-called, is worth remembering. Those representatives include the famous Civil War general, Oliver Howard, and most imposing of all, Commanding General of the Army, William T. Sherman, he of the 'scorched earth' policy and march to the sea of the Civil War.

No promise made to Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce, even those made by a respectful foe, Colonel Nelson Miles, were kept. As Joseph asked, "When will these white chiefs tell the truth?" The short answer: never.

Nonetheless, Joseph retained his strength and the calm determination to see his people through their ordeal.

Detailed and meticulously researched, Chief Joseph and the Flight of the Nez Perce provides a masterful account of one of the most sordid periods of American history as it portrays a man of devotion and humility and heart.

- Richard McGowan is Instructor of Business Ethics at Butler University.