



Chief Lookingglass

ʔelelímyeteʔqenin'

1832-1877

Young Lookingglass attended the 1863 treaty council but refused to sign the new treaty.

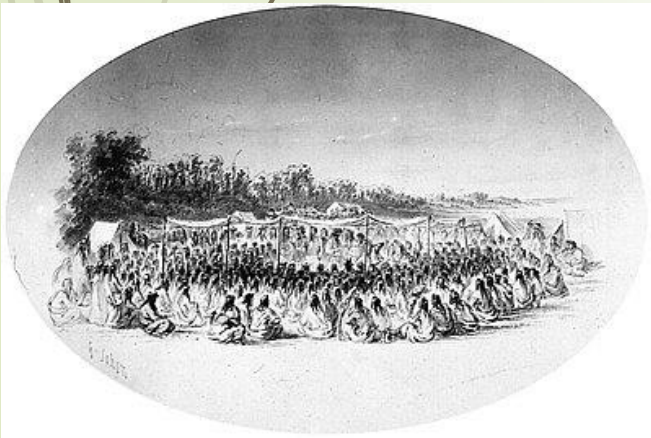
“Old” Lookingglass

Lookingglass (apáswahayqt, Flint Necklace or "Old" Lookingglass)

"Old" Lookingglass was the son of wiyéekumt and an unknown woman. He was the father of the famous Lookingglass (‘elelímyetéqenin’) or "Young" Lookingglass, who was a prominent leader during the Nez Perce War of 1877.

"Old" Lookingglass made a dramatic entrance into the 1855 Treaty proceedings after returning from "Buffalo Country" where they were fighting the Blackfeet and hunting buffalo for three years. Lookingglass, accompanied by two other leaders: ‘ipelíikt hil’amkaw’áat (Cloud Piler or Pile of Cloud) and kulukulsníinin (Red Owl), as well as a contingent of twenty warriors abruptly entered the council grounds and Lookingglass delivering these famous words: "My people, what have you done? While I was gone, you have sold my country. I have come home, and there is not left me a place on which to pitch my lodge. Go home to your lodges. I will talk to you."

Although, Lookingglass eventually assented to the treaty, many of his words are still quoted to describe some of the feelings and experiences of the Nez Perce people during that critical period. "Old" Lookingglass died in January 1863, at the age of seventy-eight.



Arrival of the Nez Perce Indians at Walla Walla Treaty May 1855



Arrival of the Nez Perce Indians to the Wallawalla Treaty
May 26 1855

The Arrival of Lookingglass

This excerpt from Army officer Lawrence Kip's journal describes the dramatic arrival of Chief Lookingglass at the 1855 Walla Walla Council. Lookingglass had been in Buffalo Country for three years hunting buffalo and fighting against the Blackfeet. Not bothering to dismount, Lookingglass scolded his fellow Nez Perce.

Today it was nearly three o'clock before they met. After a few remarks by Governor Stevens, General Palmer made a long speech addressed to those chiefs who refused yesterday to accede to the treaty. He told them, as they do not wish to go on the Nez Perces reservation (the tribes never having been friendly to each other) he would offer them another reservation, which would embrace part of the lands on which they were now living. After this offer had been clearly explained to them and considered, all acceded to it, except one tribe, the Yakimas.

It seemed as if we were getting on charmingly and the end of all difficulties was at hand, when suddenly a new explosive element dropped into this little political caldron. Just before the Council adjourned, an Indian runner arrived with the news that Looking Glass, the war chief of the Nez Perces, was coming. Half an hour afterwards, he with another chief and about twenty warriors, came in. They had just returned from an incursion into the Blackfoot country, where there had been some fighting, and they had brought with them as a trophy, one scalp, which was dangling from a pole. Governor Stevens and General Palmer went out to meet them and mutual introductions were made. Looking Glass then, without dismounting from his horse, made a short and very violent speech, which I afterwards learned was, as I suspected, an expression of his indignation at their selling the country. The Council then adjourned.

At the races this evening in the Nez Perces camp, we found ten of the young braves who came in that afternoon, basking in the enjoyment of their laurels. Dressed in buffalo skins, painted and decorated in the most fantastic style, they stood in a line on one side of the race ground, exhibiting themselves as much as possible and singing songs in honor of their exploits. After the races we rode through the Cayuse camp. They seemed to be in commotion, apparently making preparation to depart.

Saturday, June 9th. This morning the old chief Lawyer came down and took breakfast with us. The Council did not meet till 3 o'clock and matters seemed to have reached a crisis. The treaty must either be soon accepted, or the tribes will separate in hopeless bad feeling. On the strength of the assent yesterday given by all the tribes, except the Yakimas, the papers were drawn up and brought into the Council to be signed by the principal chiefs. Governor Stevens once more—for Looking Glass' benefit—explained the principal points in the treaty, and among other things, told them there would be three reservations—the Cayuses, the Walla Wallas and the Umatillas, to be placed upon one—the Nez Perces on another—and the Yakimas on the third, and that they were not to be removed to these reservations for two or three years. Looking Glass then arose and made a strong speech against the treaty, which had such an effect, that not only the Nez Perces, but all the other tribes, refused to sign it. Looking Glass, although nominally only the second chief, has more influence than Lawyer, and is in reality the chief of the different Nez Perce tribes. Governor Stevens and General Palmer made several

~ 1855. ✓

Original
and
Printed Copies

Treaty with the
Nez Percé Tribe.

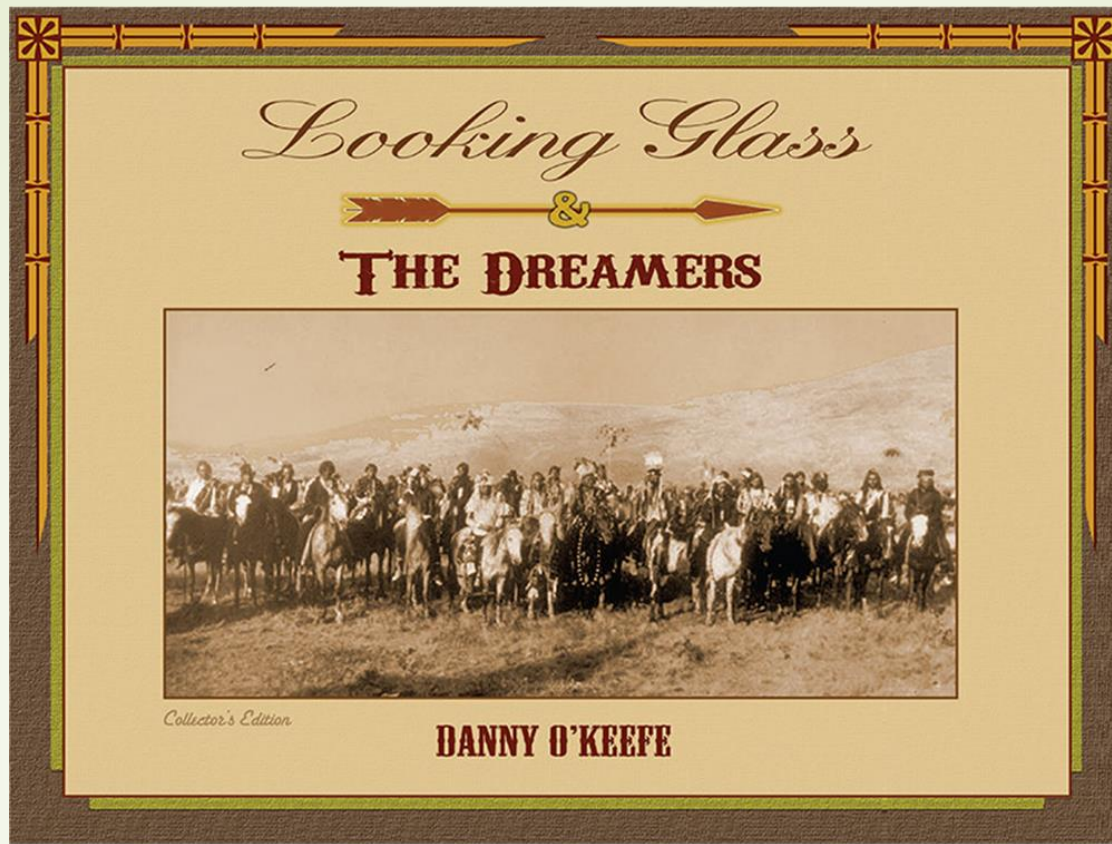
Dated, June, 11. 1855.

Ratified, April, 29. 1859.

- Lookingglass eventually signed the treaty creating the Nez Perce Reservation, but his fears about the agreement were soon confirmed. Shortly after the Walla Walla Council, gold was discovered in and around the newly established reservation. In 1863 the federal government reduced the reservation to a tenth the size agreed upon in the 1855 treaty in order to accommodate the increasing numbers of white miners and settlers.
- This reduction of the reservation eventually resulted in the Nez Perce War of 1877, in which Chief Lookingglass's son, also known as Lookingglass, was killed.

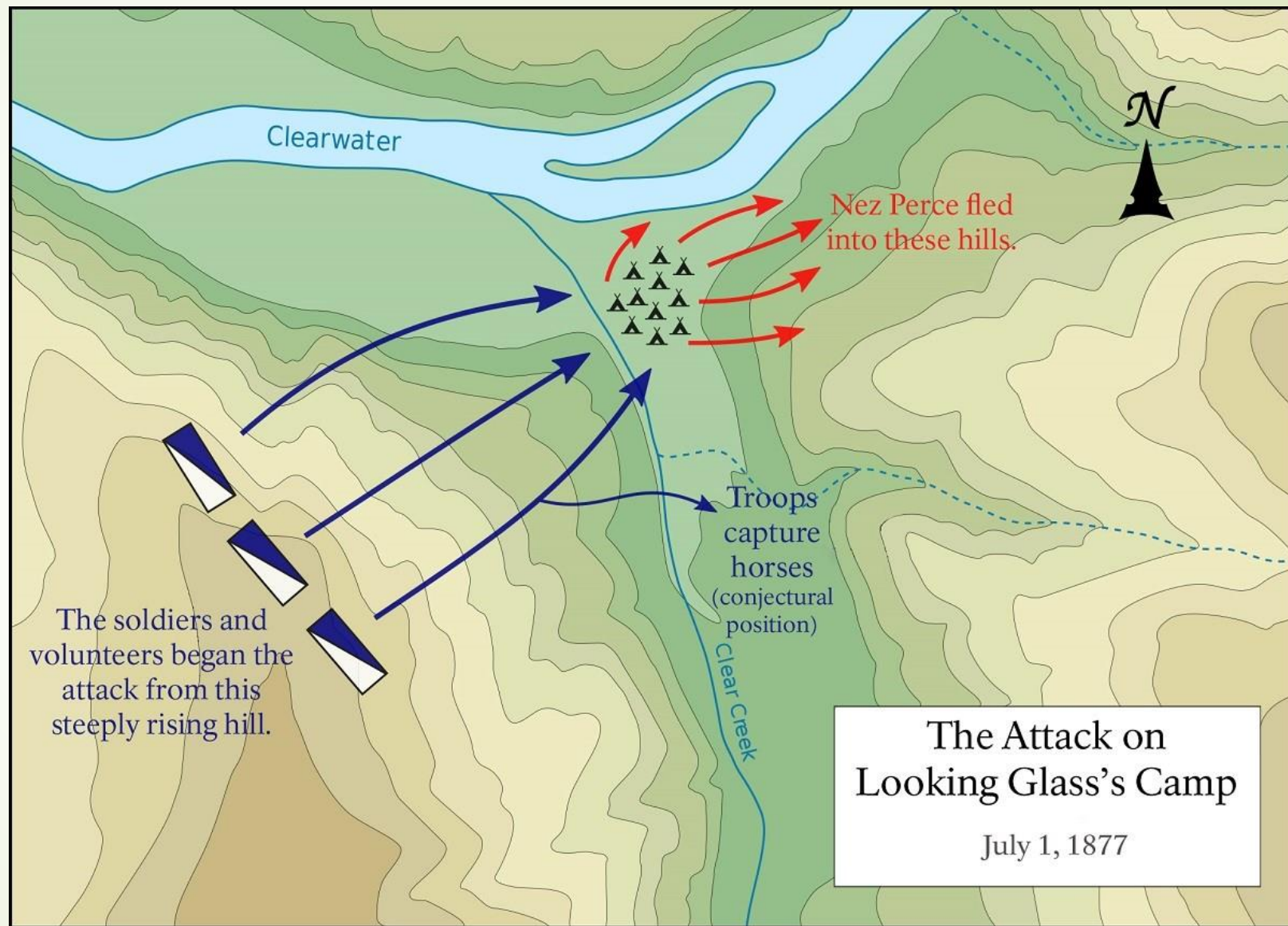
- His son, “Young” Lookingglass, ‘elelímyete’qenin’ reportedly carried a flint arrowhead or a small trade mirror suspended from his throat as his hallmark, and likewise was called by whites the same name.
- Respected for his bravery and leadership, the younger Lookingglass in 1874 reinforced those qualities when he helped his friends, the Crows, defeat a Sioux war party along the Yellowstone River in Montana.





- ▶ Lookingglass was determined to stay out of the war. Most of the people in this band were Dreamers (members of the American Indian religious movement that the Americans had vowed to destroy) but Lookingglass had convinced them that they had nothing to gain by going to war. However, American soldiers were soon spotted moving toward his village

In Idaho, he had rejected war and was secure in his belief that the whites well knew that fact. As it was Sunday, some of the people had gone into Kamiah to attend a Dreamer service. Probably fewer than 20 men of fighting age occupied the camp, which also contained about 120 children, women, and old men.





As the U.S. Army approached, Chief Lookingglass raised a white flag and tried to parley with Captain Stephen Whipple. The negotiations had hardly begun when some soldiers opened fire. The unprovoked attack convinced Chief Lookingglass that there was no way peace could be had and so he resolved to join with the other “nontreaty” Nez Perce bands.

► “Lookingglass, born in 1832, was a war chief and spokesman for some 40 families. They lived on the newly established reservation in 1877. But without provocation Army Gen. Oliver O. Howard ordered Capt. Stephen G. Whipple to “surprise and capture this chief and all that belonged to him.”

After the attack, Lookingglass joined with Chief Joseph and others. He had vast knowledge of fighting techniques, the lands of the Nez Perce and the buffalo country to the east. He provided primary war chief leadership for the tribe as they fled across the Lolo Trail and up the Bitterroot Valley. When soldiers located the Nez Perce camp at the Big Hole, Lookingglass organized the defense while Chief Joseph guided the families away.

Following that battle, Lean Elk assumed leadership command of the tribal groups, staying in charge as they traveled through Idaho, Yellowstone National Park and across Montana heading north to Canada. Lean Elk’s rigid schedule became wearing and Lookingglass again assumed primary leadership. Almost immediately the travel pace slowed. Despite disagreement among the headmen, the people complied with Looking Glass’s order to make camp on Snake Creek at noon on September 29. They were just 40 miles from Canada when the Army surrounded them. Joseph counseled surrender, but Lookingglass said he never would. While standing to look over the battlefield, he was shot. Lookingglass was the last Nez Perce fighter to die at the Bear’s Paw battle.”

Courtesy ~ Library of Congress



➔ Pictured here before the war, Lookingglass later led the fleeing Nez Perce for months in 1877. He was the last casualty at Bears Paw. His band, the *alpáweyma*, only joined the others in flight when their village on the Nez Perce Reservation was unexpectedly attacked by US forces. Yellowstone River, MT, ca. 1871. — Photo by W.H. Jackson.



- ▶ Lookingglass was killed in his rifle pit at the final battle at Snake Creek, which is near the foothills of the Bear Paw Mountains on October 5, 1877.



Chief Lookingglass PowWow – Nez Perce Tribe

- This three-day event is checkered with traditional dancing, drumming, food, memorials, and name-giving ceremonies with all ages—birth to elderly—participating.
- Powwows are a way of meeting to join in dancing, singing, visiting, renewing old friendships, and making new ones. This is a time to renew American Indian culture and preserve rich heritage.
- The event is named for the Nez Perce military leader Looking Glass (ʔelélímyeteʔqenin', born c. 1832- d. 1877). He was a principle Nez Perce architect of many of the military strategies employed by the Nez Perce during the Nez Perce War of 1877. He, along with Chief Joseph, directed the 1877 retreat from eastern Oregon into Montana and onward toward the Canadian border during the Nez Perce War. He inherited his name from his father, the prominent Nez Perce chief ʔapáswahayqt (“Flint Necklace”) or Ippakness Wayhayken (“Looking Glass Around Neck”) and was therefore called by the whites Lookingglass.



With regard to Lookingglass the Younger, Michael Turek, in his biography of Lookingglass in Notable Native Americans, writes:

“A proud and opinionated man standing six feet tall, Lookingglass was a warrior and a buffalo hunter who was familiar with the northern plains hunting grounds.”

