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The Finest Set Offered in 20 Years

THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN
BY EDWARD S. CURTIS (1868-1932)

Set Number 416 Originally Purchased by the Subscriber,
Frank A. Seiberling Founder of Goodyear Rubber, of Akron, Ohio

Nearly Unused, Bright and Fresh

Exclusive Agents

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Description

The North American Indian, being a Series of Volumes Picturing and Describing the Indians of the United States and Alaska. Edited by Frederick Webb Hodge. Foreword by Theodore Roosevelt. Field Research conducted under the patronage of J. Pierpont Morgan. [Cambridge, Mass.], 1907-1930. Portfolios 1-20 large-format photogravures, each Portfolio plate printed on Japan Vellum paper with letterpress copyright credit, title, plate numbers and image, each approximately 15 x 11 in. or the reverse on 22 x 18 in sheet.

Portfolio prints loose, in original half-morocco folding cases with gilt-impressed portfolio number; accompanied by Cambridge, MA, University Press, 1907-1910 (Volumes 1-5); Norwood, MA, Plimpton Press, 1911-1930 (Volumes 6-20).

20 4to. text volumes, containing a total of approximately 1,506 small-format photogravures. Edited by Frederick Webb Hodge, with Foreword by Theodore Roosevelt; signed and dated in ink by Curtis (on p. xvii of the General Introduction); each volume numbered '416' in ink (on the edition number page) from the projected edition of 500; each bound in the original half-brown morocco gilt by H. Blackwell.

Condition

Overall, both the text volumes, folios, and individual prints appear little used. The text volumes were part of a large library, and given their appearance, were seldom removed from the shelves on which they sat. The folio volumes were obviously stored separately, and like the text volumes show little handling wear.

Folios. Nearly as new. Bindings fine, two with replaced string ties, and two with professionally repaired corner bumps. Plates bright, as new, with an occasional as printed ink smudge in the margin of a small number of the plates.

Text Volumes. Nearly as new. Bindings on text volumes tight, and many probably never opened, with exteriors bright, and unsunned, with a couple exhibiting minor scuffs on spine or corner bumps. Text prints and interiors nearly mint, as originally printed.

Overall, this set rivals, if not exceeds condition of the Marburg set sold at Christie's in April, 2012 (*Important Books, Atlases and Manuscripts*, Lot 38) which garnered \$2.8M including fees.



Plate 336 Kotsuis and Hohhuq - Nakoaktok

Provenance

Originally purchased by the subscriber, Frank A. Seiberling (1859-1955), co-founder of the Goodyear Rubber Company.

Sold to benefit the collections and grounds of Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens, Akron, Ohio.

The Purchaser: Frank Augustus Seiberling (1859 – 1955)

Frank Augustus "F.A." Seiberling was born on October 6, 1859, in Norton, Ohio; the second of nine children to John Frederick and Catherine Miller Seiberling. The Seiberling family moved to Akron in 1865, where F.A. attended public school before enrolling in Heidelberg College in 1874. He remained in college for two years before joining his father at the J.F. Seiberling & Company, a manufacturer of agricultural machinery.

On October 12, 1887, F.A. married Gertrude Penfield. The couple resided in Akron and had seven children, six of whom lived to adulthood.

In 1898, F.A. co-founded The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company with his brother Charles "C.W." Seiberling. He began his career as the Director, and rose to President in 1906. By 1916, Goodyear was the world's largest tire producer. During his tenure, F.A. received several patents for significant improvements to tire design and manufacturing including co-inventing the Seiberling State Tire Machine, which revolutionized how tires were manufactured.

Seiberling was an indefatigable Akron booster, and used his fortune and influence to create fair housing, build a hospital, improve transportation both locally and nationally, preserve green space for the community's enjoyment and fund countless arts and culture programs and organizations. Like many of his status and wealth, F.A. believed true prosperity was gained through the enlightenment and improvement of every citizen. A 1937 *Akron Beacon Journal* article, summed up Seiberling's place in the community:

"One reason we all like the Seiberlings is because they never went 'high hat' on Akron; perhaps no other local family ever enjoyed greater prosperity and achievement . . . yet they were never so busy as to turn a disinterested ear to any pleader for Akron's future or civic welfare . . . No man in Akron ever had a broader conception of Akron's civic problems than Frank Seiberling."

In 1921, during a financial reorganization, Seiberling stepped down as President of Goodyear. Six months later, he co-founded the Seiberling Rubber Company with his brother, C.W. and serving as president until 1938. F.A. then became Chairman of the Board until 1950, when he retired at the age of 90. He died from pneumonia on August 12, 1955 at The Peoples Hospital.

In 1957, Seiberling's surviving children made the decision to donate the family's home – Stan Hywet – and grounds to the city of Akron. Today, the historic home is open to the public for tours, and the grounds and gardens are maintained for community enjoyment.

Curtis and *The North American Indian*

The North American Indian is generally acknowledged among photo-historians as one of the greatest achievements in photography. A monumental work, culled from more than 40,000 negatives Curtis took over the course of a 30 year span, the set consists of 20 folios containing 720 large format gravures, and 20 books of text, containing more than 1500 small format gravures. Curtis' sense of artistry, combined with a keen sense of responsibility to his subjects resulted in an unrivaled accomplishment.

Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952) began his photographic career in 1891, when he purchased a part interest in a Seattle studio. He quickly established a lively trade, producing portraits and commissions for various local businesses. Along with his brother Asahel, his studio became well-, attracting many of Seattle's growing cadre of society elites.

Curtis was struck by what he perceived to be the sorry conditions of Native Americans in and around Seattle, many of whom lived in shacks near his downtown studio and for whom housing, health care, education, and employment opportunities were poor. Romantic notions of "noble savages", which were still popular 25 years after the Battle at Little Big Horn were hard to reconcile in the face of such obvious poverty. The achievements of these proud people had ceased to be of interest in an era of new technology that was creating rapid change throughout the United States.

Like many of the first generation of anthropologists, Curtis believed the Indians were a "Vanishing Race," a people incapable of withstanding the onslaughts of the modern world, and with time he became passionate that his photographs could capture their glory before it was to late. In 1895 he began his immense project by photographing Princess Angeline, the daughter of Chief Seattle, for whom the city of Seattle was named. After he had paid her one dollar for her photograph she is said to have remarked "More easy work than digging clams." Angeline would be photographed many times.

Curtis's images of the Puget Sound region won several pictorialist awards and were exhibited internationally. It took a series of fortuitous circumstances before he was able to devote himself to what became one of the largest and most thorough projects in the history of photography.

At six foot two, Curtis was a rugged outdoorsman who understood and appreciated the Indian's respect for nature's powers. While on a climbing and photographing trip to Mt. Rainier, Curtis happened upon and subsequently rescued a group of stranded hikers, one of whom was George Bird Grinnell, the editor of *Forest and Stream* magazine and an expert on Indian life who had earned the name the "Father of the Blackfoot People." Another member was C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the U.S. Biological Survey. The Chief of the U.S. Forestry was also part of the group. Impressed with Curtis and his interests, they hired him the following year as the official photographer to the 1899 Harriman Alaskan Expedition, a 28-member scientific survey

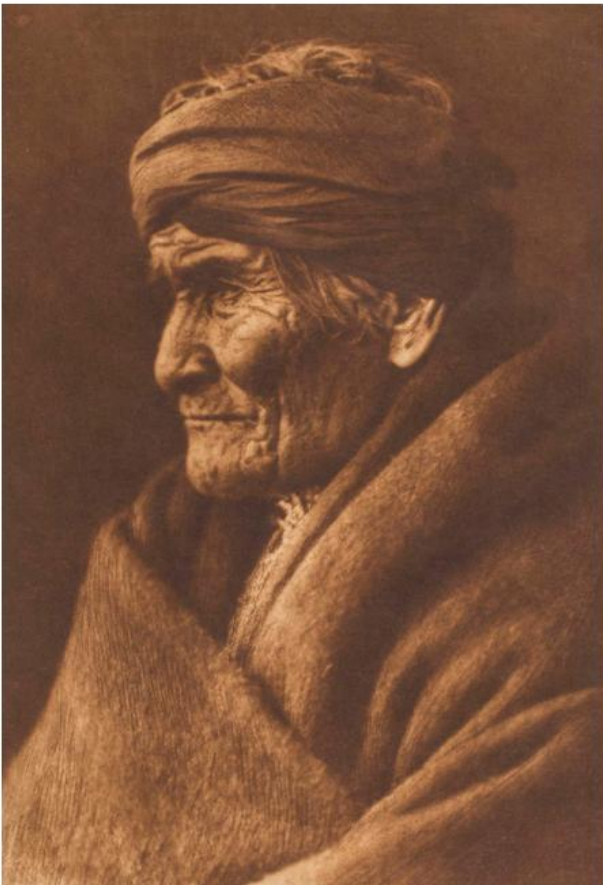


Plate 2 Geronimo - Apache



Plate 405 Watching the Dancers - Hopi



Plate 355 Dancing To Restore An Eclipsed Moon - Qágyuhl

of the Alaskan coast and several Indian villages. Two of the 14 volume set published by the Smithsonian Institution contain Curtis's documentation of the area. These images would provide a hint of what was to become his life-long passion.

The following year, Curtis accompanied Grinnell on his annual visit to the Piegan Sun Dance ceremonies. It was the catalyst Curtis needed. Surrounded by the authenticity and passion of the ritual, the encouragement of Grinnell, and the acceptance of the Indians, Curtis at 32 years of age, developed the idea of a vast and comprehensive written and photographic study of virtually every tribe living west of the Mississippi who still retained a degree of their cultural traditions.

Funded with his personal savings and the revenue he had earned from magazine articles, print sales, and lantern slide lectures, Curtis left his studio in 1900 with view cameras and glass plates to begin his project. Overcoming incredible hardships, technical difficulties, and the natural reticence and suspicion of the Native people he encountered, Curtis set about producing a significant body of work unequalled to this day. By now a distinguished photographer, Curtis had already had several highly acclaimed exhibits in Seattle, Washington D.C., New York and Boston. Nonetheless, by 1905 he had exhausted his funds, but not before his work had attracted the attention and admiration of President Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt had first met Curtis wrapped in a blanket and walking arm in arm with Chief Geronimo at a ceremony on the White House lawn. Roosevelt put Curtis in touch with the financier and bibliophile J. Pierpont Morgan who agreed to partially subsidize the project (at \$75,000 over five years) and to publish the results in a lavish set of subscription books described as "the handsomest ever

published." It is one of the ironies of history that Morgan, the philanthropist-industrialist, was both party to the destruction of native life through the construction of the western railroads, and part of the insurance that Curtis's record of Indian life would outlive the railroads themselves.

Curtis toiled for years, working diligently, often 16 hours a day, seven days a week, amongst 80 of the major Indian tribes. Working with renown anthropologists and scholars, returning year after year, Curtis and his assistant W.E. Meyers made films and wax cylinder sound recordings of over 10,000 songs, wrote down myths and stories, and undertook sophisticated linguistic analyses. Curtis documented ceremonies and life styles in words and remarkable photographs of North America's native peoples, much of which had never been revealed to an outsider. His rapport with the Indians became legendary and as time passed he was welcomed as a sensitive, observant man with a purpose, who shared many of the Indians' values. He was often inducted into secret societies, undergoing all the required ritual purifications and acts. He was made a priest in the Hopi Snake Order with a right to officiate at ceremonies. Though his education never advanced beyond grammar school, the leading minds of his day were in awe of his achievements.

In addition to making photographs, Curtis wrote two best selling books, made a successful motion picture, lectured extensively, and produced touring musicals utilizing hand-colored stereo slides, films, and native music, transposed and performed by a nine-piece orchestra. Most of this work was done to raise much needed funds for the project.

Unlike many of his contemporaries or predecessors, Curtis strove for a degree of scientific accuracy in his artistic representations.



Plate 32 A Son of the Desert - Navaho

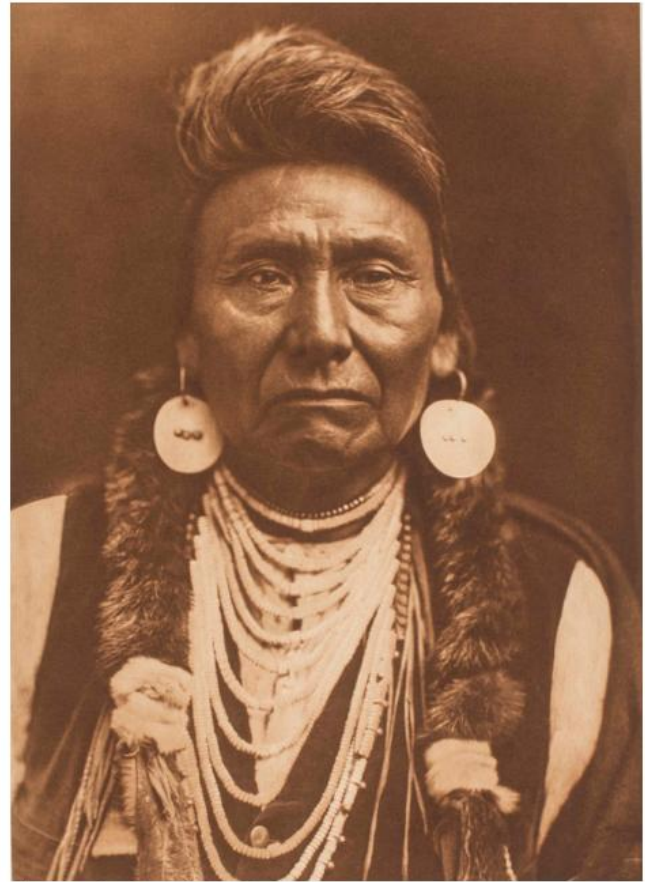


Plate 256 Chief Joseph - Nez Perce

Photographers of that era tended to view Indians as exotic subjects and being anxious to sell their pictures they frequently dressed their subjects up in "typically Indian" clothes, which they carried with them from tribe to tribe, regardless of authenticity. We often forget that by the time that photography had been invented, even western tribes had had much contact with white civilization and generally dressed in jeans, calico and salvaged army uniforms, just like everyone else in the West. Curtis encouraged his subjects to wear their ceremonial clothes, or, if these were unavailable, to go to elders and make new ones based on the old patterns.

His desire was neither to fool his audience nor to chronicle the changes native peoples were undergoing. He wished to provide a personal document, as close to the truth as possible, of their traditional life before it disappeared altogether. He made no pretense of objectivity in his photographs. He was looking beyond the surface, and as is evident, his sitters were willing partners in the exploration. Curtis's romanticism reflected his sensibilities and the era he worked in. His artistic integrity and respect for his subjects have left us with an understanding view of native peoples at the turn of the 20th century. *The North American Indian* is a testament to the extraordinary vision and energy of a tireless, obsessed man.

Curtis paid a high price for his passion. The project destroyed his business, his family life, and ultimately his health. But from 1900

to 1930, when the last volume on the Eskimos was completed, he had made over 40,000 primarily glass plate negatives with 14 x 17" and 11 x 14" view cameras. During the last few years, he used a 6 x 8" reflex camera as well. For the most part the negatives are lost. A popular but unfounded story has it that the emulsions were all scraped off so that the glass could be reused.

The legacy of Curtis's effort is a magnificent set of books and portfolios. Edited by Frederick Webb Hodges, of the Bureau of American Ethnology, the leading contemporary authority on Indians, and with a foreword by Theodore Roosevelt, Curtis's *The North American Indian* contained twenty Moroccan leather bound volumes of text, interspersed with approximately 75 photogravures of Curtis's images per volume. A portfolio containing 36 large format gravure prints accompanied each volume. There are over 2,200 individual images in a complete set. Production costs at the time totaled over one million dollars. The anticipated edition of 500 was never realized. The \$3,000 price tag was high and interest in Indians began to wane during the Great Depression. In the end, only about 300 sets were printed, with only about 272 ever bound and sold, mostly to institutions which locked them away in rare book rooms or special collections.

The images were printed on three different imported papers, each with a correspondingly higher price tag: Japan Vellum (a smooth cream-colored paper), Holland Van Gelder (a rougher

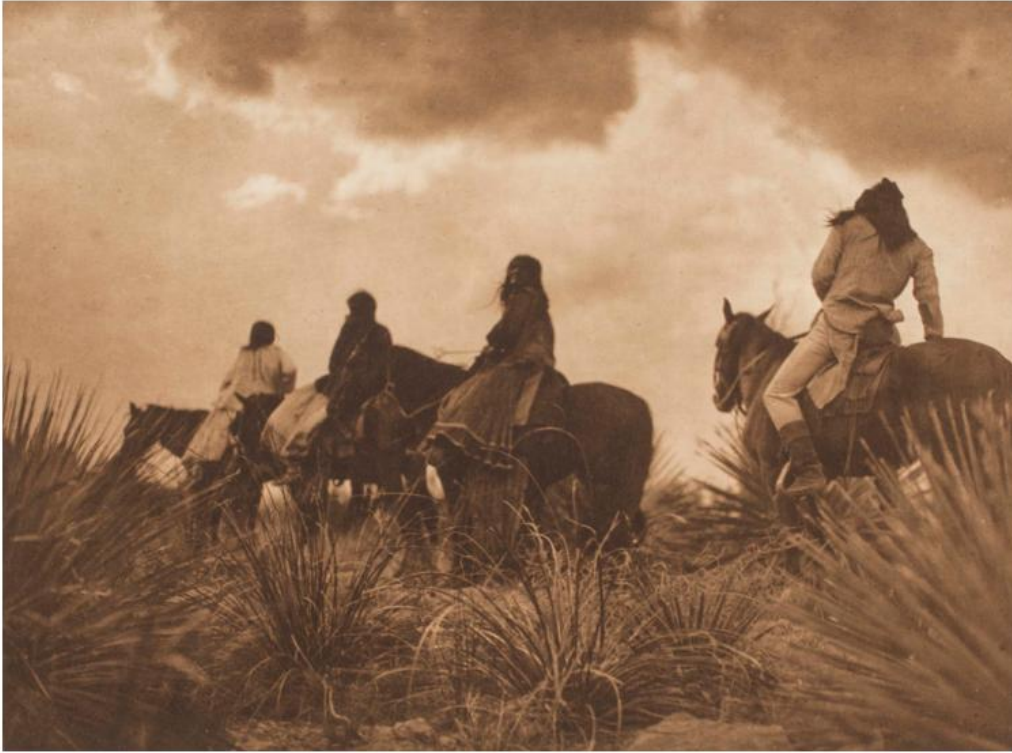


Plate 9 The Storm - Apache

whiter, textured surface) and Tissue (a very thin sheet of paper). The printing process used was gravure, which uses an etched copper plate made from the original negative, which is inked and hand pulled. There is no half-tone dot pattern, and the range of tones evident in all the printings is a testament to the brilliance of this method. Alfred Stieglitz recognized this when he used the same process for his influential *Camera Work* magazine. It is a process rarely used today due to the time and expense involved.

Price on Request

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Plate 150 Bear's Belly - Arikara