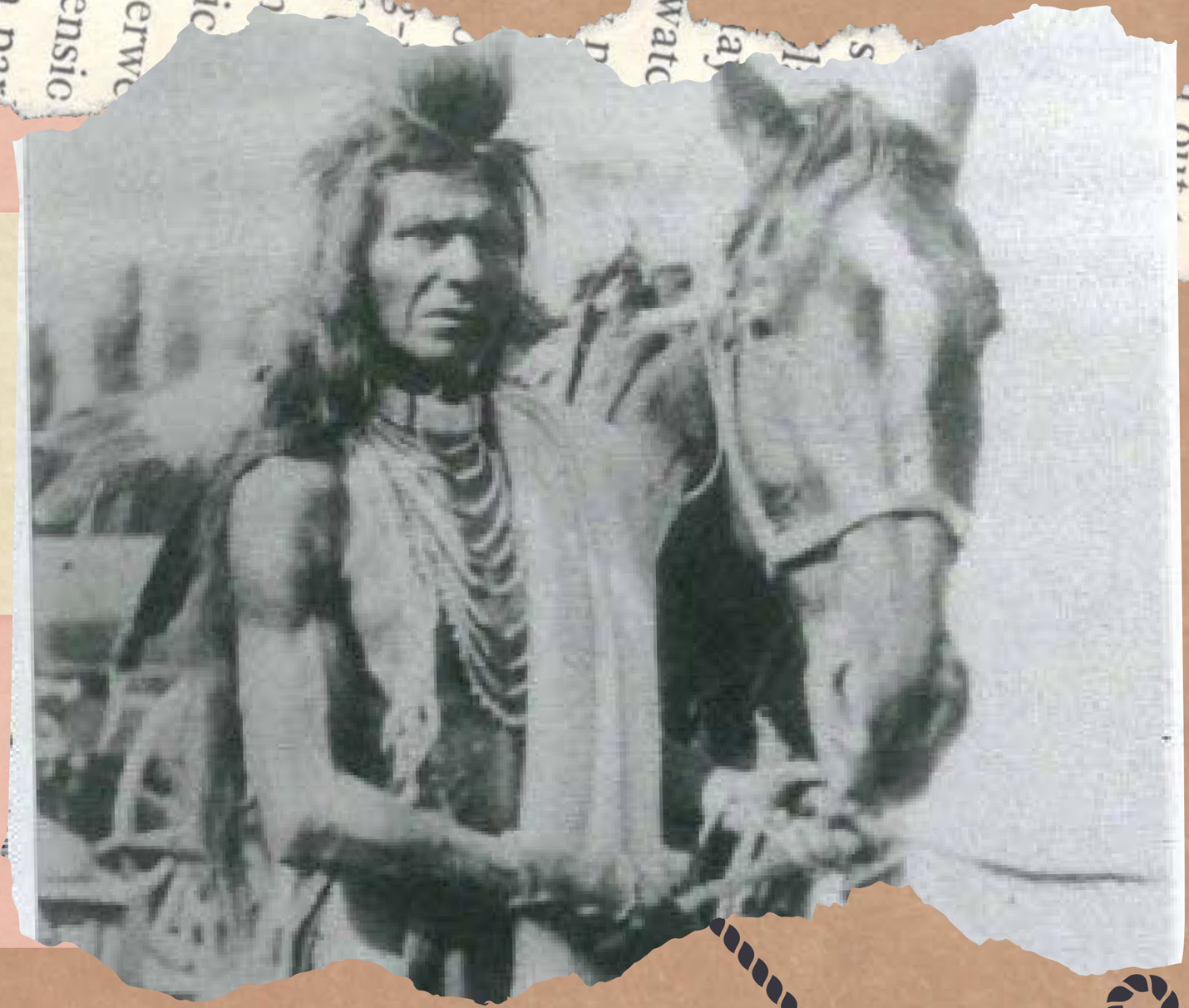
# Jackson Sundown

(1863 – DECEMBER 18, 1923)



# WIYETENETÚUCICKAN, SUN BLANKET

- Born a Member of the Wallowa Band of Nez Perce Tribe.
- Chief Joseph's Nephew.
- Native American rodeo rider who has become a folk-hero for his mythic performance in the 1916 Pendleton Round-Up.

# GROWING UP

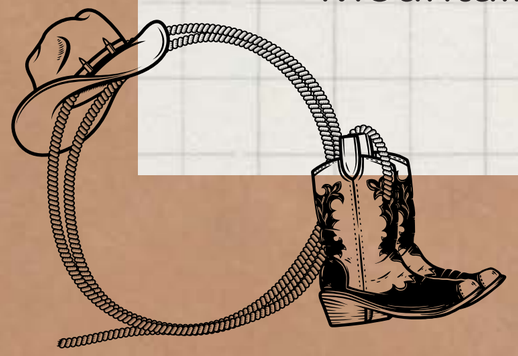
- Sundown was born in 1863, in Montana, into the visiting Wallowa Band of the Nez Perce, later led by Chief Joseph.
- The Nez Perce were renowned for their mastery of horses and Sundown learned how to breed and raise horses at an early age.
- Young boys were typically horse holders during battles and he frequently helped watch the herd until becoming active in the Nez Perce War of 1877
- Unlike Joseph and many of his tribesmen survived the Battle of the Bear Paw in October of 1877 and escaped north into Canada with Whitebirds people.
- Taken into Sioux by their leader Sitting Bulls and hids own family. He continued living in hiding with Sitting Bull and others following the battle of Bear Paw.

# After the War

- In 1879, Sundown returned to the U.S. and lived briefly at Nespelem, Washington, and then the Flathead Reservation in northwest Montana, where he married and had two children.

- He settled back in Idaho on the Nez Perce Reservation in 1910 and two years later married Cecilia Wapshela, a widow with two children and ranch owner, and they lived at her place at Jacques Spur, near Culdesac.

- He built a horse breeding business. Most notably for his work at the Reeves Ranch on Wapsheli Creek on Craig Mountain and the Salmon River.



# Rodeo

- Sundown made his living by breeding, raising, "breaking," and selling horses. To make additional money, Sundown entered into rodeos and dominated his opponents, many of whom would withdraw after learning that he would participate.

- Jackson Sundown won many all-around cash pots, which takes the highest average scores from all events, though he was best known for bareback and saddle bronc horse riding.

- His appearance differed greatly from other rodeo riders as he wore bright colored shirts, large and elegant woolen chaps and tied his long braids under his chin. Sundown entered into rodeos across the west and in Canada into his early 50s.

# The 50's Ride

- In 1915 at age 52, Sundown took third place in the all-around at the Pendleton Roundup and decided to retire from rodeo, which had payed it's tole on his body.
- However, the following year, an artist who was doing a sculpture of Sundown convinced him to enter the Roundup one last time, an offer that Sundown would only accepted after the artist agreed to pay the entry fee.
- Sundown was twice the age of the other semi-finalists but advanced after high scores in the saddle bronc and bareback horseriding competitions.
- His final ride is an event of great mythology to this day among American Indians and rodeo fans. It is told that Sundown drew a very fierce horse named Angel and that the horse bucked so furiously that Sundown removed his cowboy hat and fanned the horse to get it to cool off, at which time he and the horse merged into one being.
- Sundown won the all-around event and became immortalized as a hero of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, which includes the Nez Perce.

# HALL OF FAME

- Sundown passed of pneumonia 7 years later at the age of 60 and was buried at Slickpoo Mission Cemetery near Jacques Spur, Idaho. At the time of his death, the U.S. Government did not consider Native Americans to be American Citizens.

- This photograph is of Annette Burke and Adeline Sundown Adams during the ceremony of inducting Jackson Sundown, Adeline's father, into the Pendleton Round Up Hall of Fame in 1972. The Round Up committee discovered that Adeline was the daughter of Jackson Sundown and this is the picture with her in front of the main Round Up Grandstand.

- A large gathering of Native Americans continues at the Pendleton Roundup in Pendleton, Oregon where a pow-wow is held during the Round-up in late September. Stories of Waaya-Tonah-Toesits-Kahn continue to fill the air at this event amongst the drumming, fry bread, gambling, and rodeoing.