

Americas Training

12/11/15

Jill Ahlberg Yohe and Dakota Hoska



Headdress, late 19th-early 20th century Tsistsistas (Cheyenne) or Lakota

Bald eagle and other feathers, wool, buffalo hide, cowhide, horsehair, beads, pigments

GIFT OF JACK GARCIA, LAKOTA 2015.6

Head dress

This headdress was given to Mia by the Jack Garcia Family from Pine Ridge. It was given to Mia for safe keeping because the family who gifted it to us wanted to make sure it was preserved in a good way. However, if we were ever thinking of deaccessioning it, this piece would go back to the family or to a place of the family's choice. The family was gifted this headpiece by someone who collected Native American art and artifacts. That collector wanted to return this headpiece to a Native family.

A chief is given his eagle feathers for acts of kindness, bravery or for being honored in other ways for serving the people. Each feather must be earned. The fact that there are so many eagle feathers on this headdress shows that if this headdress was at one time the property of a chief, then the original wearer would have at one time been highly honored by his people.

The cap portion of this headdress was probably replaced at some time. This is a fairly common practice because that's the part of the piece that wears out due to use. We do not know who reconstructed this headpiece/cap portion. Because of some of the beadwork, Jill thinks this headdress itself was possibly Cheyenne in origin. At the training I learned that the actual cap part was probably reconstructed during the time of Wild Bill Cody's Wild West Shows and that the headdress may have been worn by someone for those same shows. Jill and I will look for more information on this subject.

A headdress traditionally is a very important and potent symbol for the Native tribes who used them, and so, before installing this headdress, there were some ceremonies conducted. There was a prayer ceremony led by a Lakhóta medicine man and attended by many members of the native and museum community. The prayer tie you see in the bottom of the case is filled with the tobacco that was in the *čhañnúpa* (pipe) (pronounced cha-Nu-ba) smoked at that ceremony. While this headdress is installed, it will be turned in different directions 4 x per year.