



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

Frank Kenjockey and Louis Belmont Newell Native
American Entertainers collection, c.1886-1940

Rachel Menyuk

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National Museum of the American Indian
4220 Silver Hill Rd
Suitland, Maryland 20746-2863
nmaiarchives@si.edu
<http://nmai.si.edu/explore/collections/archive/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	Frank Kenjockety and Louis Belmont Newell Native American Entertainers collection
Date:	1886-1940
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.025
Creator:	Newell, Louis Belmont Kenjockety, Frank
Extent:	2 Linear feet 39 Photographs
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Frank Kenjockety and Louis B. Newell Native American Entertainers collection includes ephemera, documents and photographs from two prominent Native American [entertainers] Frank Kenjockety (Cayuga), also known as "Chief Strong Fox" and Louis Belmont Newell, also known as "Rolling Thunder". Kenjockety's collection contains photographs, ephemera and a small amount of personal records from his career as a circus troupe leader and lecturer from 1909-1940. Newell's collection contains ephemera from his career as a traveling Medicine Man and entertainer including remedy and ointment packaging as well as broadsides and flyers.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was purchased in 2005.

Separated Materials

Along with the archival materials, five additional objects were purchased and are a part of the NMAI Ethnology collection. They have catalog numbers 26/5414 through 26/5418 and include outfits supposedly worn by Frank Kenjockety "Chief Strong Fox" and his wife Leona Kenjockety.

Separated Materials

All of the photographs in this collection are located in cool storage and arranged in folders by their catalog numbers.

Processing Information

Processed by Rachel Menyuk, Archives Technician in 2013.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Frank Kenjockety and Louis B. Newell Native American Entertainers collection, Box and Folder Number; National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Access to NMAI Archive Center collections is by appointment only, Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Please contact the archives to make an appointment (phone: 301-238-1400, email: nmaiarchives@si.edu).

Conditions Governing Use

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish or broadcast materials from the collection must be requested from National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center. Please submit a written request to nmaiarchives@si.edu.

Biographical / Historical

This collection of Native American Entertainers materials was put together by Crown Collectibles, a privately held historical research company based out of Richmond Virginia.

Frank Kenjockety was born in 1871 to Jesse and Sarah Kenjockety on Cattaraugus Territory, Seneca Nation and made his home in Salamanca, New York. He was head of the Cayuga Tribe of the Iroquois Federation. In the early 1900's he formed a vaudeville troupe called "Kenjockety' s Hippodrome and Wild West Show". They traveled by train and played at state fairs, carnivals and with other traveling circuses. In the late 1920's Frank Kenjockety took the name "Chief Strong Fox". He became nationally known as an "Indian Chief Lecturer" and his troupe was billed as "Real American Indians in Costume- Direct from the U.S. Government Indian Reservation". Their performances included "Ceremonial Rites, Singing, War Dance, Medicine Dance, Feather Dance, Prayer Song, Famous Adoption Form and lectures on the part the American Indian had played in the history of the United States". Kenjockety's wife, Leona, and daughter, Mabel, also traveled as performers with the troupe. Mabel first appeared on horseback as a child and went on to become a trick rider. While on tour in December 1915, the train on which they were traveling ran head-on into another train that was mistakenly switched on the same track. Mr. Kenjockety survived, but many in his company perished. Undaunted by the tragedy, he rebuilt his company and continued to perform. He and his troupe continued to play fairs, school assemblies and circuses and went on at least two world tours. In 1937, they traveled on the steamer ship "Bremen". Correspondence in 1941 reveals that their popularity had waned and apparently the troupe disbanded around that time. Chief Strong Fox was also well known for the "lectures" he gave on Native American History. He became popular with school and other groups (Rotary Club, etc.) throughout New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, and often "adopted" some of his Caucasian audience as members of his tribe. He received many letters from school officials praising his talks on Indian history and customs to be of "educational value". Kenjockety passed away in 1944.

Known to his family as Belmont and to the public as Chief Rolling Thunder, **Louis Belmont Newell** was born around 1858 to Thomas Newell and Marie Parsons of Indian Island, Old Town, Maine. Newell appears to have married several times and his first daughter Blanche was born to Victoria Tahamont around 1886. It is around this time that Newell is first referred to as Chief Rolling Thunder and that his company, the Kiowa Medicine Company, begins touring. The show was comprised of "moral" entertainment and lectures given on the customs, habits, manners and religion of tribes. Newell would also sell "traditional Kiowa" medicines and give out health guides. It is uncertain when the company was actually formed and though Newell claimed that he was a descendent of the First Chief Medicine Man of the Kiowa Nation, Teet-Toot-Sah, this was most likely just for his public image. It is much more likely that his parents were Penobscots from Maine. Newell married Louisa Stump of Iroquois descent in 1891. Louisa was an expert shot and travelled with the Kiowa Medicine Company for some time. In 1894, Newell married his fourth wife Jeanne "Jennie" Congleton who served as business manager for the Kiowa Medicine and Vaudeville Company for many years. Newell died December 1, 1933 and was buried in Randolph, NY. More information on L.B. Newell has been compiled by descendants of Newell and can be found on Ne-Do-Ba, a geneological website for the Wabanaki people.

Scope and Contents

The Native American Entertainers collection includes ephemera, documents and photographs from two prominent Native American entertainers, Frank Kenjockety, also known as "Chief Strong Fox" and Louis Belmont Newell, also known as "Rolling Thunder". Kenjockety's collection contains photographs, ephemera and a small amount of personal records from his career as a circus troupe leader and lecturer from 1909-1940. Newell's collection contains ephemera from his career as a traveling Medicine Man and entertainer from the 1880's until the 1930's. This includes remedy and ointment packaging as well as broadsides and flyers.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series; **Series 1:** Frank Kenjockety "Chief Strong Fox", and **Series 2:** Louis Belmont Newell "Chief Rolling Thunder". Series 1 contains three subseries by material type and is arranged alphabetically.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Cayuga
- Circus performers -- Photographs
- Kiowa Indians -- Rites and ceremonies
- Traveling theater -- United States -- 20th century

Cultures:

- Cayuga

Types of Materials:

- Broadsides
- Ephemera
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks

Container Listing

Series 1: Frank Kenjockety "Chief Strong Fox" Collection, 1909-1940

38 Photographic prints

1.5 Linear feet

Scope and Contents: The Frank Kenjockety collection contains photographs, documents and ephemera from Kenjockety's time as an entertainer and Vaudeville troupe leader from the early 1900's to the late 1930's. Also called "Chief Strong Fox," Kenjockety travelled extensively on the east coast with his troupe of performers. Photographs includes portraits of performers in Kenjockety's troupe, including photographs of Mabel Kenjockety, Frank Kenjockety's daughter and half-tones of Princess Sa Lillian. There are also group pictures of Kenjockety's troupe in front of various venues. Ephemera includes broadsides, flyers, tickets and stationary. There is also a scrapbook that includes letters, clippings and reviews from Kenjockety's later years touring schools as well as a Father's day card from Mabel to Frank.

1.1: Personal Papers, 1932-1936, 1941, 1927-1928

Box 1, Item 1	Mabel DeOrlo's (nee Kenjockety) Appointment Book, 1927-1928
Box 1, Item 2	Scrapbook: Recommendation Letters, Clippings, Enrollment Letters, 1932-1936
Box 2, Folder 1	Script Idea, Father's Day Card from Mabel, 1941, undated

1.2: Broadsides, Flyers, Stationary, undated

Box 2, Folder 2	Boyce's Historical Entertainment, Broadsides, undated
Box 2, Folder 3	Boyce's Historical Entertainment, Tickets, undated
Box 2, Folder 4	F.L. Kenjockety, Band Director, Musician's Contract, undated
Box 2, Folder 5	F.L. Kenjockety's Society Circus and Frontier Days in Cheyenne, Flyers, undated
Box 2, Folder 6	Kenjockety's Frontier Wild West and Indian Village Show, Flyer and Contract, 1916
Box 2, Folder 7	Letterheads and Envelopes, undated
Box 2, Folder 8	Sarrasani Nieuwe Circus, Tickets, Ten Big Acts, Broadsides, undated
Box 1, Item 3	"The Red House Indian Harmonica Band" Broadside, undated

1.3: Photographs, 1909-1940, undated

38 Photographic prints

Photo-folder 1 P33920: [Frank Kenjockety, "Chief Strong Fox", undated](#)
1 Photographic print
Notes: Portrait of Frank Kenjockety (Cayuga), also known by his show name 'Chief Strong Fox,' in traditional clothing including a feather headdress, beaded pouch, and face paint. He stands in front of a wire fence at Moscow High School in Pennsylvania.
Culture: Cayuga

Photo-folder 1 P33921: [Frank Kenjockety with Wife \(Leona\) and Daughter \(Mabel\), 1939](#)
1 Photographic print
Notes: Portrait of Frank Kenjockety (Cayuga), also known by his show name 'Chief Strong Fox,' his daughter Mabel (on left) and his wife, Leona (on right), all standing in front of a tipi. Chief Strong Fox is wearing traditional attire, including a feather headdress and beaded clothing, while women are wearing fringed and beaded dresses.
Culture: Cayuga

Photo-folder 1 P33922: [Chief Strong Fox Troupe on Stage , 1920](#)
1 Photographic print
Notes: Frank Kenjockety (Cayuga), also known by his show name 'Chief Strong Fox,' and his troupe of thirteen Native American performers. Group, dressed in traditional clothing, stand in a semi-circle on stage, while one man walks across the stage. Included in the picture are Chief Strong Fox (fourth from the left), his wife Leona (third from left), and their daughter Mabel (fifth from left). Lawrence Pierce, brother to Leona, is throwing knives in the center. Also included in this image are Moybee, Phidalia, Lillian Pierce and Robert Jr. Swihart.
Culture: Cayuga

Photo-folder 1 P33923: [Frank Kenjockety with Al Sigl , undated](#)
1 Photographic print
Notes: Al Sigl, Times-Union new broadcaster, interviewing Frank Kenjockety (Cayuga), also known by his show name 'Chief Strong Fox.' Fox wears traditional clothing, including a feather headdress, and sits next to the desk where Sigl is reporting.
Culture: Cayuga

Photo-folder 1 P33924: [Chief Strong Fox Troupe with Prin. Stanley Johnson and his Seneca Harmonica Band, 1939](#)
1 Photographic print
Notes: Outdoor group portrait of the combined troupes of Prin. Stanley W. Johnson and his Seneca harmonica band (young boys in white shirts) and the six members of Chief Strong Fox's troupe. Back row (L-R): Robert Swihart, Fancher Pierce, Leona Kenjockety, Mabel Kenjockety, unknown, Frank Kenjockety. Prin. Stanley Johnson is kneeling in front of Frank Kenjockety

(Chief Strong Fox) on the right. They are in Salamanca, New York.

Culture: Cayuga
Seneca

Photo-folder 2	P33925, P33926: Unknown Man Posing on Horse , undated 2 Photographic prints Notes: Man standing on the back of a horse posing in front of an architectural backdrop; part of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) performing troupe act.
Photo-folder 2	P33927: Men in front of Sautelle's Wild Animal Arena and Annex , undated 1 Photographic print Notes: Business men and band members with their instruments posing in front of a sign that reads, "Sig. Sautelle's wild animal Arena and Annex, Admission 10 cents" in Homer, New York.
Photo-folder 2	P33928: Unknown Man with Chimes and Bells , undated 1 Photographic print Notes: A young man stands with his horse in front of chimes and bells on an apparatus; possibly part of a musical act for Frank Kenjockety's (aka Chief Strong Fox) troupe.
Photo-folder 2	P33929: Group of Uniformed Men with Horse , undated 1 Photographic print Notes: Outside, a group of unidentified Native men in uniform pose with a harnessed horse.
Photo-folder 3	P33930: Group of Men in a Field , undated 1 Photographic print Notes: Group of men, some dressed in cowboy hats and scout uniforms, standing in a field; three are on horseback.
Photo-folder 3	P33931: Unknown Man with Trombone , undated 1 Photographic print Notes: Portrait of a man holding a trombone and wearing a band uniform; possibly part of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) performing troupe.
Photo-folder 3	P33932: Billie Palmer , undated 1 Photographic print Notes: Studio portrait of Billie Palmer wearing an overcoat and holding a hat, while posing in front of a curtain.
Photo-folder 3	P33933, P33934: Charles Wheat, Equilibrist , undated 2 Photographic prints Notes: Studio portrait of Charles Wheat, an equilibrist in a leotard costume (P33933) and in a suit and tie (P33934).
Photo-folder 4	P33935: The Mysterious Lewis, Marvelous Wizard , undated 1 Photographic print

	Notes:	Man known as Mysterious Lewis, Marvelous Wizard, with his arms and legs bound in chains; possibly part of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) performing troupe.
Photo-folder 4	P33936: Unknown Woman with Horse, undated 1 Photographic print Notes:	Horse drinking from a cup that a young woman is holding at the Shrum's Ice Cream cart; possibly part of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) traveling troupe.
Photo-folder 4	P33937, P33938, P33939: Princess Sa Lillian in various poses, 1910, undated 3 Photographic prints Notes:	Portraits of Princess Sa Lillian in various costumes and poses. Possibly part of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) traveling troupe.
Photo-folder 5	P33940, P33941, P33942, P33943: Princess Sa Lillian in various poses, 1910 4 Photographic prints Notes:	Portraits of Princess Sa Lillian in various costumes and poses. Possibly part of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) traveling troupe.
Photo-folder 5	P33944: David Nicholson, Contortionist, undated 1 Photographic print Notes:	Portrait of contortionist David Nicholson posing with one leg behind his head; possibly part of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) traveling troupe.
Box 3, Item 1	P33946: Native American Baseball Team Portrait, undated Notes:	Native American baseball team photo; men in uniforms sitting on wooden bleachers likely in New York.
Box 3, Item 2	P33947: Outdoor Group Portrait, undated 1 Photographic print Notes:	Group posing outside a house, most wearing traditional clothing and four individuals wearing buffalo head masks; possibly part of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) traveling troupe.
Box 3, Item 3	P33948: Outdoor Group Portrait, undated 1 Photographic print Notes:	Group of performers in costumes posing on a hillside; individuals include band members, contortionists, clowns, and strong men all of whom are possibly from Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) traveling troupe.
Box 3, Item 4	P33949: Outdoor Group Portrait, undated 1 Photographic print Notes:	Outdoor group portrait of Native and Non-Native performers who are possibly part of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) traveling troupe; included in portrait are band

members with instruments, men wearing traditional feather headdresses, scouts on horses, and women wearing dresses decorated with elk teeth.

Box 3, Item 5 P33950: [The Heavenly Twins \(with Frank Huffman and Billie Palmer\), 1913](#)
1 Photographic print
Notes: Portrait of the 'Heavenly Twins' with Frank Huffman and Billie Palmer; two women in white dresses and two men dressed in cowboy hats and chaps posing in front of a wagon.

Box 3, Item 6 P33951: [Welsh Brothers Show Group Portrait, undated](#)
1 Photographic print
Notes: Group portrait outside a tent of the Welsh Brothers Shows band members dressed in uniforms and clown costumes; show possibly affiliated with Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) traveling troupe.

Box 3, Item 7-8 P33952, P33P53: [Mabel Kenjockety, 1909](#)
2 Photographic prints
Notes: Portrait of Mabel Kenjockety (Cayuga), around age 9, on horseback and wearing a cowgirl outfit in Crescent Park, Rhode Island. She is the daughter of Chief Strong Fox (aka Frank Kenjockety) and was part of the G.P. Kemp Wild West show.
Culture: Cayuga

Box 3, Item 9-10 P33954, P33955: [Mabel Kenjockety, 1915](#)
2 Photographic prints
Notes: Portrait of Mabel Kenjockety (Cayuga), around age 16, wearing a white dress and standing on a kneeling horse; she is the daughter of Chief Strong Fox (aka Frank Kenjockety) and was part of his performing troupe.
Culture: Cayuga

Box 3, Item 11-12 P33956, P33958: [Wild West Performers Posing on Horse Back, undated](#)
2 Photographic prints
Notes: P33956: Wild west show performers posing on horseback in front of a grandstand; some individuals hold instruments, while one man stands on his horse and whirls a lasso in the air. P33958: Wild west show performers posing on horseback in front of a scenery backdrop; Mabel, daughter of Chief Strong Fox (aka Frank Kenjockety), is third from the left.

Box 3, Item 13 P33957: [Mourners at a Funeral, 1915](#)
1 Photographic print
Notes: Group of mourners at a funeral; possibly for the victims of a 1915 train accident that killed several of Chief Strong Fox's (aka Frank Kenjockety) traveling troupe performers.

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Series 2: Louis Belmont Newell "Rolling Thunder" Collection, 1886-1930

1 Photographic print

0.5 Linear feet

Scope and Contents: The Louis B. Newell collection consists of materials from Newell's time performing as "Chief Rolling Thunder." This includes broadsides, flyers and stationary for the Rolling Thunder Vaudeville Company, a photographic portrait of Newell as well as packaging and leaflets for Chief Rolling Thunder's medicines and remedies.

Box 2, Folder 9	Rolling Thunder Letterhead, undated
Box 1, Item 4	Rolling Thunder Vaudeville Company, Broadsides, undated
Box 2, Folder 10	Rolling Thunder Vaudeville Company, Flyers, undated
Box 2, Folder 11	Guide to Health Leaflets: Kiowa Indian Recipes and Mus-Ka-Bia, undated
Box 2, Folder 12	Packaging for "Kiowa Indian Ointment", "Mus-K-Bia", "Pile Ointment" and "Wisheta Rub", undated
Box 2, Folder 13	Recipe for "Cough Syrup" and "Worm Destroyer" Leaflet, undated
Folder 6	<p>P33945: Portrait of Rolling Thunder in Profile, 1900 Image mounted on a 4.5 x 6.75 inch card.</p> <p>Notes: Portrait of Rolling Thunder, aka L.B. Newell, in profile, wearing a suit and bow tie. A smaller image of a young girl is superimposed on his shirt. Although Newell claimed to be Kiowa, it is more likely that he was Penobscot from Maine. Handwritten note on back of image reads, "#11/ To Blanche Newell / From your papa / Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year / Please write to me, L.B. Newell / Clipper Office /New York City"</p>

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