



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

Doctor Thomas B. Marquis photographs from Montana

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2025

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	Doctor Thomas B. Marquis photographs from Montana
Date:	1920-1928
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.344
Creator:	Marquis, Thomas Bailey, 1869-1935
Extent:	8 Photographic prints
Language:	English .
Summary:	This collection includes eight black and white photographic prints of Doctor Thomas B. Marquis while serving as an agency physician in Montana.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated to the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation by Dr. Thomas B. Marquis in 1929.

Processing Information

Processed by Mattie Lewis, Archive Technician and Rachel Menyuk, Processing Archivist, 2025.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Doctor Thomas B. Marquis photographs from Montana, image #, NMAI.AC.344; National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

Thomas Bailey Marquis (1869-1935) was born on a farm in Missouri. His father bought a share of the local newspaper and sent Thomas and his older brother Birney to learn the printing trade. While working as a printer in St. Joseph, Missouri, Marquis became interested in the West. He moved to Helena, Montana, continued working as a printer, and met Native Americans for the first time. In 1894, Marquis began medical school to have a steadier career; his private practice was a mixed success. He volunteered with the Army Medical Corps during World War I and treated influenza in England when the war ended. He eventually returned to the U.S. and worked as an Indian agency physician with the Civil Service Commission first for the Northern Cheyenne, then for the Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke). He wrote about his experiences with Native Americans and published some of his stories. Marquis was a self-taught historian who had a special interest in the Battle of Little Bighorn. He published multiple books and photographs on Plains Indians and General Custer.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains eight black and white, 3x5 inch or smaller, photographs of Dr. Thomas B. Marquis during his time as an agency physician for Northern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne) and the Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke). Explanatory notes on each photograph were glued to the prints, likely by Dr. Marquis, before sending them to the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. These original notes have been included in the descriptions.

Catalog numbers P25982-P25989.

Arrangement

Arranged by catalog number.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke)
Northern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

Cultures:

Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke)
Northern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white photographs

Places:

Custer Battlefield (Montana)
Lame Deer Agency (Montana)
Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, Montana

Container Listing

Photo-folder 1	P25982: Dr. Marquis and woman outside of a log house, circa 1922 1 Photographic print Notes: One 4.5x3 in. black and white photograph. Attached note: "Dr. marquis examining the scars of an old Cheyenne woman who was shot through the chest when soldiers whipped out Cheyenne camp far up a branch of Powder River, November 26th, 1976. (On page 198, Wooden Leg story, this woman is mentioned as having been shot in Custer battle. My mistake. I shall correct MS.)"
Photo-folder 1	P25983: Dr. Marquis and his Ford, July 1922 1 Photographic print Notes: One 2.5x3.5 in. black and white photograph. Attached note: "Dr. Marquis as agency physician for the Northern Cheyennes, Lame Derr, Montanta, 1922."
Photo-folder 1	P25984: Dr. Marquis sitting on the ground with two men, June 1926 1 Photographic print Notes: One 2.5x4 in. black and white photograph. Attached note: The younger Chief Little Wolf (a cousin of Wooden Leg), who was a warrior at Custer battle, is telling Dr. Marquis of the great fight. Pine, who was age 15 at the battle, sits behiind. At Custer field near the monument, June 24, 1946. Chapter 5 Little Wolf, Pine and the White Man Doctor on Custer field."
Photo-folder 1	P25985: Dr. Marquis next to tent, July 1928 1 Photograph Notes: One 3 x 4.5 in. black and white photograph. Attached note: "Dr. Marquis in camp at Crow Agency."
Photo-folder 1	P25986: Wall display of artifacts, Circa 1920 1 Photograph Notes: One 3 x 4.5 in. black and white photograph. Attached note "Some Indian curios on the wall of office of Dr. Marquis at Laurel, Montana. (These on this wall are not connected with Custer battle)"
Photo-folder 1	P25987: Dr. Marquis holding onto a pole , July 1921 1 Photographic print Notes: One 3x4 in. black and white photograph. Attached note" This snapshot, made nine-and-a-half years ago, when I was age 51 1/2, depcits my gymnastic capabilities at that time. I could vault the pole shown, at heaght of 4ft. 10 in. During later years I have not done any gymnasium work, but I do a great deal of walking. I keep myself gaunt and flat-bellied. Perfect trim, excellent health, at all times. I fear I'll never be eligible for old-soldier pension."
Photo-folder 1	P25988: Wall display of Custer Battle relics, Circa 1920

1 Photographic print

Notes:

One 4x7 in. black and white photograph. Attached note" This wall of my office reception-room holds many of my Custer-battle Indian relics, but not all of them. Since this photo was made I have obtained some additional ones. Also, only two Custer-soldier rifles are shown here, while I own six of them. The other four are loaned out for public display. Each separate display article on my wall has attached to it a placard telling its particular story. Usually, photo of the Indian from whom it was obtained is attached. The large placards tell, in general, of the reason why the Cheyennes had these articles and kept them hidden away so long.

Beginning at left: three ammunition belts taken from Custer soldiers killed June 25, 1876. Then at top, pouch made from bootleg of a Custer soldier. Next, carbine rifle captured by Big Beaver from a Custer soldier. Next, above, buffalo-skin hat worn by warrior Indian as a medicine charm. Next, carbine rifle captured by White Moon from a Custer soldier killed. next, middle, bottle of loaded cartridges from Custer rifles (reloaded, not same as used in the battle). Next, above, revolver captured by White Elk from a Custer soldier. Next, to right, saddlebags captured by Bobtail Horse from a Custer soldier. Then, to left and below, scalping knife of a Sioux. Upper right, Dr. Marquis' map showing various campaigns of Custer- in Kansas, Texas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, and Montana during various years 1867-1876. Just below my large map, at its lower left corner, Russell White Bear's Custer-battlefield map. At lower right-hand corner of picture, a calendar reproduction of some oil-painting copy I have some typewritten comment, headed "WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?" and i point out many features wherein it mistakenly depicts the scene."

Photo-folder 1

P25989: Custer field, 50th anniversary, June 1926

1 Photographic print

Notes:

One 3.5x5.5 in. black and white photograph. Attached note: "I attended all of the events during the 50th anniversary celebration of Custer battle. As the parade of veterans of Indian wars came up the hill I had a position near the monument. Thousands of other people were on the hill. Many photographers were busy. A few months later I was astonished to find this postcard and others like it on sale. Some photographer had operated just behind me. The straw-hatted figure in the left foreground is a back view of Dr. Marquis. So I have clear proof that I attended that celebration."