

## Red Cloud's Manikin

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*Joanna Cohan Scherer, Smithsonian Institution*

The following link leads to an online exhibition about researching a historical photograph of a manikin of a Native American and using it as evidence to re-identify museum artifacts that had lost their provenance over the course of more than a century. The photograph of the manikin was selected to be used as an early representation of a Plains Indian in a museum in the *Handbook of North American Indians: Plains*, Volume 13, 2001: 30, and the exhibition includes a look at the politics of Plains Indian representation in the 1870s. Anthropologist Joanna Cohan Scherer did a detailed analysis of the photograph to find out who the manikin portrayed. The face of the manikin was found to be a representation of the important Oglala Sioux Chief Red Cloud who visited Washington, D.C. in 1872 at which time he had a cast made of his head at the Smithsonian Institution. Further research on the clothing on the manikin found that the shirt in the Smithsonian's Anthropology collection had been labeled unidentified and investigation brought back its owner, Chief Smoke, another Sioux leader. It was also possible to reunite an early Sioux headdress collected in 1855 with its feather trailer, both shown on the manikin. The site also includes a slide show with a brief biography and many photographs of Red Cloud's life. In summary, this site details the value of historical photographs as primary documents and the use of photographs to identify material culture items in museums.

<http://anthropology.si.edu/redcloud/index.htm>

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