



Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology

JANE PICKERING

William and Muriel Seabury Howells Director

Charmaine White Face, Spokesperson, 1894 Sioux Treaty Council
Zumila Wobaga, Itancan
PO Box 2003
Rapid City, SD 57709

June 12, 2024

Dear Ms. White Face,

Interim President Alan Garber's office asked me to respond on his behalf to your letter of May 31. Our provenance records describe a Ghost Dance shirt and a Ghost Dance dress which are associated with the Wounded Knee Massacre site. The Museum also cares for two other items from the Massacre site. I have attached more information which includes images. Please let me know if you would prefer a version of the documentation with no images

The Museum is committed to the ethical stewardship of cultural items in its care and fully recognizes that in some cases such ethical stewardship can only be achieved by the return of items to their home communities. We were pleased to be able to welcome Professor Fenelon to the Museum in February 2023 and he viewed the Ghost Dance items while he was here.

Regarding the return of cultural items, and particularly those that might fall under the NAGPRA legislation and for which clear lineal descendancy cannot be established, our approach has been to work directly with Tribal governments, in particular the Tribal Chairs and those individuals designated by the Tribal Chair, including Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and repatriation specialists, among others. We feel this is an appropriate way, as an institution, to respect tribal governance and to defer to tribal preferences.

We understand that Professor Fenelon has brought this matter to the attention of the Tribal leadership of Cheyenne River Sioux, Standing Rock Sioux, and Oglala Sioux, and we look forward to beginning a collaborative dialogue regarding these items.

Sincerely,

Jane Pickering