



Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History

MS 2005-07 Red Thunder Cloud collection

National Anthropological Archives
Museum Support Center
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<http://www.anthropology.si.edu/naa/>

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | National Anthropological Archives |
| Title: | MS 2005-07 Red Thunder Cloud collection |
| Date: | undated |
| Identifier: | NAA.MS2005-07 |
| Creator: | Unti, Oreste Vincent (Collector) Red Thunder Cloud, 1919-1996 |
| Extent: | 5 Pages (1 photographic print; and 1 periodical) |
| Language: | English . |

Administrative Information

Citation

Manuscript 2005-07 Red Thunder Cloud collection, National Anthropological Archives,
Smithsonian Institution

Biographical / Historical

Red Thunder Cloud was an alias of Cromwell Ashbie Hawkins West (1922-1996), who posed as a Catawba and native speaker of the language. In 1938, he wrote a letter to Frank G. Speck, introducing himself as a "16 year old Catawba Indian." He continued his masquerade for the rest of his life and served as an assistant and informant to linguists and anthropologists. While his veracity was questioned by some, it was not until his death that it was confirmed that he was not Catawba, much less a Native American. For more information, please see Ives Goddard's article "The Identity of Red Thunder Cloud" at <http://anthropology.si.edu/goddard1.html>.

Scope and Contents

Materials relating to Red Thunder Cloud collected by his friend Oreste Vincent Unti: (1) Photographic print (8x10) inscribed "Best wishes Bernie from Red Thunder Cloud." (2) Two-page letter in Spanish to Oreste Unti from Armando Diaz, East Hampton, NY, May 22, 1945. (3) Two-page letter to Oreste Unti from "Your Brother Tez" [i.e. Red Thunder Cloud], Catawba Lodge, East Hampton, NY, n.d. (4) Photocopy of obituary for Oreste Vincent Unti published in the Chestnut Hill Local (Oct 25, 2001). (5) Periodical published by Red Thunder Cloud at Catawba Lodge: "The Indian War Drum: The Voice of the Eastern Indians" Vol. 1 No 2. (Feb 1946).

Local Numbers

NAA MS 2005-07

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Catawba Indians
- Indians of North America -- Ethnic identity
- Indians of North America -- Southern States

Cultures:

- Indians of North America -- Southern States

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Photographs