

WC8612011  
Ball-headed Club

Ball head war clubs of this general type were fairly common throughout the eastern parts of the country and as far west as the Missouri River. Many of these clubs have the effigy of a long-tailed animal carved over the ball, facing the enemy. Some clubs have a human face carved on the front of the ball. The carving of a full human form on the ball is unique, there being no other known examples. Unfortunately, the head of this human figure was broken off and lost by one of its former and unknown owners.

Effigies carved on war clubs most probably represented the guardian spirits of the club owners, comparable to such effigies on ceremonial pipes. The carving of this human figure is reminiscent of low-relief carvings of humans and horses on pipe bowls of the Eastern Sioux in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also the slanting butt of this club suggests an origin from southwest of the Great Lakes. Most likely, an Eastern Sioux carver made this remarkable club in the nineteenth century. Due to the introduction of metal tomahawks and firearms, such clubs had become status symbols by that time, to be carried in dances.

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May 2007