

About the Author



Ella Cara Deloria (1888-1971)

In future history books on South Dakota, the “Life and Times” of Ella Deloria (1888-1971) should be one of the chapters. She is a true South Dakotan who was born at White Swan in the Yankton Sioux Reservation. Her Dakota name, Anpetu Waste, means “beautiful day.” Her Protestant Episcopal religion and Sioux heritage were major influences in her life. Ms. Deloria completed her high school training as a student at All Saints boarding school in Sioux Falls and then enrolled in Oberlin College. She then completed her BS degree in science at Columbia Teachers College in New York City (1910-1913), where she met Franz Boas, an internationally acclaimed anthropologist. Later Ms. Deloria collaborated extensively with Dr. Boas, serving as an American Indian ethnologist and linguist. She worked with him to translate and edit a number of texts in the Sioux language. In 1929, Ms. Deloria published a report on the Sun Dance in *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*. An accomplished anthropologist in her own right, she published three scholarly texts: *Dakota Texts* (1932), a foundational work on Sioux dialects, folklore, and mythology; *Dakota Grammar* (1941), a collaboration with Dr. Boas; and *Speaking of Indians* (1944), a scholarly yet readable depiction of Sioux culture. The first draft of *Waterlily* was also written in the early 1940's. Ms. Deloria returned to All Saints in Sioux Falls (1915-1919). She worked for the YWCA as a health educator and traveled extensively throughout the West while working with Indian students and carefully observing diverse Indian groups. After working at Haskell Indian School, she worked extensively with Boas until his death in 1942. From 1955 to 1958, she served as director of her former elementary school, St. Elizabeth School, on a bluff overlooking the confluence of the Grand and Missouri Rivers in western South Dakota. From 1962 to 1966, she worked on various projects at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. Ella Deloria lived the remaining years of her life in Vermillion and died in 1971 at the age of 83. Her inspirational career can serve as a model for all of us; she had a most remarkable life.

<http://teachmulticulturallit.wikispaces.com>

Note: Information was attained from one of the South Dakota Book Bag Study Guides (a project supported with funding from the South Dakota Humanities Council).

<http://library.sd.gov/PROG/sdbookbag/index.aspx>