



*Ella Cara Deloria*

## *Dakota Images*

Ella C. Deloria, a well-known linguistic anthropologist, dedicated her life to portraying a realistic picture of the American Indian. A Yankton Sioux, she was born in Wakpala, South Dakota, on the Standing Rock Reservation on 30 January 1888. She received her early education at All Saints School in Sioux Falls, going from there to Oberlin College in Ohio, and then to Columbia University where she received her B.S. degree. After teaching for several years, she served as the national health education secretary for Indian schools and reservations for the YWCA.

In 1929 she was appointed research specialist in Indian ethnology and linguistics with the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University. With the famous anthropologist Frank Boaz, she coauthored two works on the Dakota language prepared for the technical use of scholars. She also contributed many articles to *Folklore Journal* and other periodicals on Sioux Indian legends, customs, music, and beliefs.

In addition, Deloria served on survey committees of Indian communities and lectured on the social, economical, educational, and religious aspects of Indian life from first-hand knowledge. She was the only woman member and the only Indian on the Navajo Enquiry party of four experts, sponsored by the Phelps-Stokes Fund of New York in 1944. For her work with Indians she received the annual award given by the Indian Council Fire of Chicago to the American Indian whose achievements are worthy of national recognition. She was a recipient of a Fellowship from the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and until her death on 12 February 1971, she was doing research for the University of South Dakota under a National Science Foundation grant.

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