

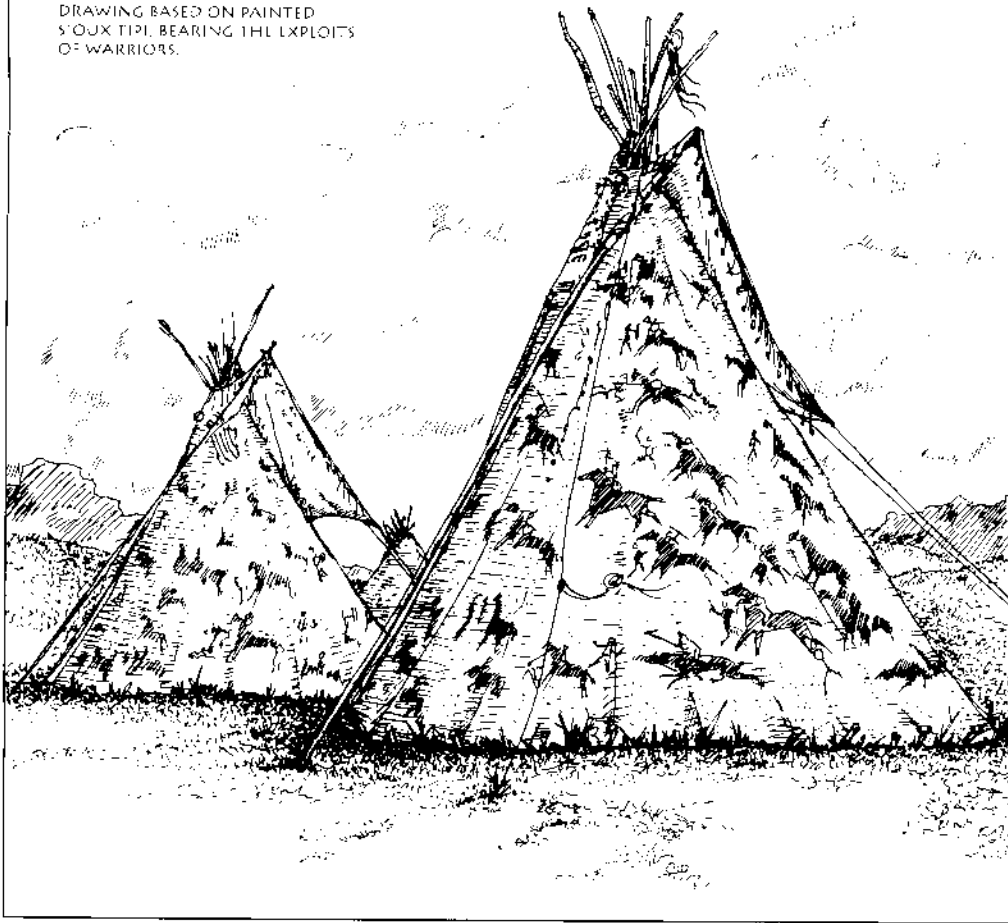


LAKOTA

A LANGUAGE COURSE FOR BEGINNERS



DRAWING BASED ON PAINTED
SIOUX TEEPIE, BEARING THE EXPLOITS
OF WARRIORS.



THIS BOOK IS DESIGNED TO BE USED
WITH A SERIES OF LAKOTA LANGUAGE CASSETTES.
THEY ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE PUBLISHER.

AUDIO-FORUM

A Division of Jeffrey Norton Publishers
Guilford, Connecticut

Lakota: A Language Course for Beginners
formerly *Hecetu Yelo (The Way It Is) Student Manual*

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ISBN 0-88432-448-6 text and cassettes
ISBN 0-88432-609-8 text only

Published by Audio-Forum,
a division of Jeffrey Norton Publishers, Inc.
On-the-Green, Guilford, Connecticut 06437-2635

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These Lakota language lessons were produced under a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to Oglala Lakota College and KILI radio. Lakota language lessons, in somewhat different format from these presented on the cassettes, were aired on KILI radio during 1986-88.

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Student Manual

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Introduction

Siouan Language Family : Lakota and Related Languages and Dialects

by Janette K. Murray

The Lakota language today is spoken by thousands of Sioux people living primarily in South Dakota west of the Missouri River. Learning the language can be both informal and formal. Children growing up on the Sioux reservations may learn the language at home, in formal lessons while attending elementary and high school, or at one of the tribal colleges.

The term "Sioux" is used to refer to people of similar ethnic backgrounds and includes not only the Lakota speakers, but also the Dakota speakers. The term "Sioux" was first recorded by Jean Nicolet, a French fur trader, on his visit to the Winnebagos of Green Bay in 1640. The Ojibway, whose language is in the Algonquian family called the tribes to the west *nadowe-is-iw-ug* which the French further corrupted to *Naduesiu*. *Nadowe* means *adder or enemy*; *is* means *lesser or smaller* and *iw-ug* means *they are*.¹

The Siouan Language Family is a very large group which has many subdivisions. Albert Gallatin, Synopsis of the Indian Tribes within the United States East of the Rocky Mountains, and in the British and Russian Possessions in North America (1836), was the first to use the "Siouan" family designation which he divided into the Winnebagos, the "Dahcotah proper" and Assiniboin, the Minitari, and the Osages and southern kindred tribes (i.e. Degiha- speakers). He identified the "Dahcotah proper" as the Mdewakantons, Wahpetons, Wahpekutes, and Sissetons to the east, and the Yanktons, Yanktonais, and Tetons to the west. In the next major linguistic work, Indian Linguistic Families of America North of Mexico, (1890) John Wesley Powell, adopted Gallatin's designation of

¹ William K. Powers, Oglala Religion (Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 1975), p. 5.

Siouan, and then applied the subclass "Dakota" to the Santees, Yanktons, Yanktonais and Teton. ¹

The classifications and terminology applied to language becomes increasingly confusing as various scholars seemed to mix linguistic, tribal, and geographical distinctions. Franz Boas, eminent scholar at Columbia University, who dominated ethnological studies of the Native American tribes for half a century, referred to "Dakota" as a language with the following dialects - Santee, Yankton, Teton and Assiniboine. ² The following classification has been accepted by a number of scholars in modern times.

	<u>Classification</u>
<u>Santees</u> (Eastern Sioux)	Geographical
Dakota	Dialect
Mdewakantons, Wahpetons Wahpekutes, Sissetons	Sub bands
<u>Yankton</u> (Middle Sioux)	Geographical
Nakota	Dialect
Yanktons, Yanktonais, Assiniboins	Sub bands
<u>Tetons</u> (Western Sioux)	Geographical
Lakota	Dialect
Oglala, Sicagus, Hunkpapas, Mnikowaju Sihasapa, Oohenunpa, Itazipco	

Although there seems to be little question that the Tetons are definitely Lakota and refer to themselves as such and that the Santees are Dakota, there is some question about the Yanktons. According to

¹ Powers, p. 8

² Boas, Franz and John R. Swanton. "Siouan." In Handbook of North American Indian Languages. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin, No. 40, pt 1. Washington, DC.

Raymond DeMallie, the Yankton and Yanktonais are also Dakota; however, in phonological context, the prominent d of the Santee became n.

Like her mentor Franz Boas, Ella Deloria, a linguist who was herself Dakota, referred to the four dialects of Dakota as Yankton, Santee, Teton and Assiniboiné in her early work.² Later, she referred to the dialects in this way: Teton say Lakota; Yankton and Santee say Dakota. Assiniboiné, a kindred dialect says Nakota. According to Deloria, the first three — the dialects of the Santee, Teton, and Yankton — are mutually intelligible, and therefore, true dialects.³

Rev. Eugene Buechel, who studied language on both the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations, also agrees with Deloria. "The Dakota tongue has three dialects: the Lakota, Yankton, and Dakota, with a fourth sister dialect in the Assiniboiné."⁴

By far the largest group of speakers are the Lakota including all of the Sioux located west of the Missouri River. At the time of the break up of the Great Sioux Reservation, the Tetons were composed of seven divisions and their descendants now reside on six reservations in South Dakota.

Teton (Prairie Dwellers)

Oglala (they scatter their own)	Pine Ridge Reservation
Sicangu (burned thighs)	Rosebud Reservation
	Lower Brule
Hunkpapa (end of the circle)	western half of the Standing Rock Reservation
Mnikawozu (planters beside the stream)	Cheyenne River Reservation

¹ Raymond J. DeMallie, Vestiges of a Proud Nation, ed. Glenn E. Markoe, Royal B. Hassrick and Raymond J. DeMallie (Burlington, VT: Robert Hull Fleming Museum, 1986), p. 21.

² Ella Deloria, Speaking of Indians (Vermillion: University of South Dakota, Dakota Press, 1979), p. 9.

³ Ella Deloria, Lakot — wacazeyatopi wa (Dakota Terms for Museum Objects: Being a Study and Recording of Pertinent Materials). Unpublished manuscript commissioned by the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Washington, DC. 1961.

⁴ Rev. Eugene Buechel, Lakota — English Dictionary (Pine Ridge: Red Cloud Indian School and Holy Rosary Mission, 1970), p. 16.

Shasapa (black feet)	eastern half of the Standing Rock Reservation
Oohenupa (two kettle)	Cheyenne River Reservation
Itazipco (without bows)	Cheyenne River Reservation ¹

Today, there are also Lakota speakers on the Wood Mountain Reserve in Saskatchewan who are descendants of Sitting Bull's band.

The Santee-speaking Dakota live at the Santee Reservation in Nebraska; the Sisseton/Wahpeton (Lake Traverse) Reservation and Flandreau in South Dakota; Redwood Falls, Morton and Granite Falls and Prairie Island in Minnesota; the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana; and the Devil's Lake Reservation in North Dakota.

The Dakota speakers, who fled Minnesota after the Minnesota Uprising, also live at Standing Buffalo Reserve, Round Plains Reserve, and White Cap Reserve in Saskatchewan and at Sioux Valley Reserve, Birdtail Reserve, Oak Lake Reserve, Dakota Plains Reserve and Dakota Tipi Reserve in Manitoba.

The Yankton-speaking Dakota live at the former Yankton reservation, now centering around Greenwood, the Fort Thompson reservation (formerly Crow Creek reservation) in South Dakota; at Cannonball (on the North Dakota side of the Standing Rock reservation), the Devil's Lake Reservation in North Dakota; and at Fort Peck in Montana.

The Assinibolines are at the Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Reservations in Montana.

The study of the language of North American Indians has been undertaken by many non-Indians for various reasons. In the early 19th century, missionaries studied and learned the language of the Sioux tribes in Minnesota Territory and Dakota Territory as a necessary prerequisite to their mission work. About the turn of the century, the federal government recognized the need for accurate scientific information about the lives, customs, beliefs and languages of the Indian tribes inhabiting the Great Plains and the West. Congress, through the

¹ Deloria, manuscript, pp. 2 - 3.

Bureau of American Ethnology, commissioned a number of scholars to study these diverse tribes and to publish their findings in a series of bulletins and annual reports. After the 1930's English came to be the dominate languages used in the schools and other reservation agencies. Native language research became the province of university trained scholars working in field or applied linguistics.

There are two major periods of language study of Dakota/Lakota language though they are closely related and somewhat overlapping. The first studies were the publications of the missionaries to the Santee in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The second group of publications deal mainly with the Teton and were sponsored by the Bureau of American Ethnology from about 1890 to 1932.

Missionaries began their work among the Santee living in Minnesota in the 1820's and 1830's. Joseph Renville, of French and Indian descent, established a trading post at Lac que Parle on the Minnesota River in 1826. As was happening throughout the frontier, the traders were soon followed by the missionaries. In 1834, Samuel Pond and his brother Gideon left their Connecticut village to settle among the Sioux for the purpose of converting them to Christianity even though they did not have the support of any church group. The brothers encountered the Sioux living at Prairie de Chien in what was then Minnesota Territory. Later they moved to Lake Calhoun. They began their work quite simply by asking the Indians as well as army officers in the area, Dakota words for objects and places. They composed a number of word lists in this fashion.

In 1836, Gideon Pond went to Renville's post at Lac que Parle where he met Dr. Thomas Williamson, a physician serving at the Episcopal Missionary. A year later Rev. Stephen Return Riggs joined the "Dakota Mission." The Pond brothers assisted both Williamson and Riggs in learning Dakota. They began by translating hymns and simple Bible stories. Their most ambitious project was translating both the New Testament and the Old Testament into Dakota.¹

Ella Deloria gives this description of how the work proceeded :

¹ John D. Nicholas, "Introduction," in Stephen Return Riggs, Dakota Grammar, Texts, and Ethnography (Minneapolis : Ross & Haines, 1973), pp. 2-4.

It is a log house, ample and many roomed, for it is the home of the French and Dakota trader, Renville, a man of keen intellect, though without any schooling to speak of and without any fluency in English. In a bare room with flickering candlelight he sits hour on hour of an evening after a hard day of manual work. Dr. Riggs and his helpers are across the table from him. They are working on the translation. It is a blessing incalculable for all Dakota missions that Dr. Williamson and Riggs are scholars. One of them reads a verse in Hebrew, if it is from the Old Testament; or in Greek, if from the new. He ponders its essence, stripped of idiom, and then he gives it in French. Renville, receiving it thus in his father's civilized language, now thinks it through very carefully and at length turns it out again, this time in his mother's tongue. Slowly and patiently he repeats it as often as needed while Dr. Riggs and the others write it down in the Dakota phonetics already devised by the Pond brothers.²

Riggs and Williamson worked together for five years (1835 - 1840) and their Dakota Grammar and Dictionary was printed in 1852. Although the title page noted that the material was "collected by the members of the Dakota Mission" and only edited by Riggs, the Pond brothers felt they had not been given adequate credit for their part in the contribution.³

The dictionary was expanded and republished by the Bureau of North American Ethnology in 1890. Dakota Grammar, Texts, and Ethnography was published by the U.S. Geographical Survey in 1893. Listed as story tellers were three Dakota speakers: Michael Renville, the son of Joseph Renville; David Grey Cloud, a Presbytery preacher; and James Garvie, a teacher at the Nebraska Indian School established by Rev. Alfred Riggs, the son of Stephen Return Riggs. The inclusion of these stories was significant because it marked the first printing of native speakers telling their own stories in their own language rather than Dakota translations of Biblical stories.

John Williamson, the son of Dr. Thomas Williamson, accompanied the Santee, who were forced out of Minnesota following the uprising of 1862 to their reservation at Crow Creek. He stayed at Crow Creek for seven

² Ella Deloria, Speaking of Indians (New York: Friendship Press, 1944), p. 103.

³ Nicholas, p. 4.

years giving them instructions in religion and writing their language. His dictionary was printed in 1868, 1886, and 1902.

There can be no doubt that the dictionaries, grammars and translations were of great value to the many missions in the Dakotas. They continued to be used for more than 50 years. However, it must be remembered that the purposes of Riggs and his colleagues were not to preserve the language of the Dakota, but to use the language as a vehicle for bringing about the transition from Dakota to English. Like others of his time, Riggs was convinced that the road to white civilization was the only salvation for the Indian. In the "Ethnography" Riggs wrote :

Let a well-arranged severalty bill be enacted into law, and Indians be guaranteed civil rights as other men, and they will soon cease to be Indians. The Indian tribes of our continent may become extinct as such; but if this extinction is brought about by introducing them into civilization and Christianity and merging them into our great nation, which is receiving accretions from all others, who will deplore the result? Rather let us labor for it, realizing that if by our efforts they cease to be Indians and become fellow citizens it will be our glory and joy. ¹

The missionaries who went farther west to work among the Tetons built upon the labors of their brothers who began with the Dakota.

Father Eugene Buechel, a native of Germany, began his ministry at the Holy Rosary Mission on the Pine Ridge reservation in 1907 under the auspices of the Catholic Society of Jesus. He also spent a number of years at St. Francis Mission on the Rosebud reservation. For nearly forty years, he collected Lakota words for a dictionary. He published a detailed grammatical study, A Grammar of Lakota in 1939. His dictionary of Lakota was not published until 1970, sixteen years after his death.

Valuable as these missionary works are, they do have limitations as linguistic studies. Dr. Franz Boas of Columbia University commented on Buechel's work. "The analysis of Dakota in Buechel's Grammar is based on the theory that every syllable has a meaning. The arrangement is that of an English Grammar with Dakota equivalents. Since much of the

¹ Stephen Return Riggs, Dakota Grammar, Texts and Ethnography, p. 167.

material is based on Biblical translations and prayers, many unidiomatic forms occur."¹

Following the Civil War, the U.S. government turned its attention to the problems of the western territories. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was greatly strengthened until the Bureau nearly controlled every aspect of Indian life. While the BIA focused on matters of administration, the much smaller Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution concentrated on the documentation of Indian culture, religion, customs and language. For fifty-four years (1878 - 1932), Congress authorized studies and published a series of bulletins and annual reports. The Bureau of Ethnology ultimately produced 48 volumes of ethnic papers, some of which were contributed by the U.S. Geographical Survey Commission. The last volume, a comprehensive index, was published in 1932.

One of the first publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology was the "Indian Linguistic Families of America North of Mexico" compiled by J.W. Powell in 1891. With comparatively few changes Powell's outline has continued to hold up to scholarly investigations to the present time. James Owen Dorsey's Study of Siouan Cults was published by the Bureau in 1891. Dorsey was a missionary to the Ponca Indians in Nebraska from 1871 to 1873. He did comparative studies of the languages of the Ponca, Omaha, Kansa, Winnebago, and Biloxi. Unlike other missionaries, Dorsey adopted an objective approach to language and legends. By his own experience he discovered a principle that Franz Boas stressed with his students of linguistics. "It is safer to let the Indian tell his own story in his own words rather than to endeavor to question him in such a manner as to reveal what answers are desired or expected."² Although Dorsey did not include the Dakota/Lakota texts as given by his informants, he did cite the speakers as John Bruyier, a Dakota speaker, and George Bushotter and George Sword, Lakota speakers.³

James Mooney's work, The Ghost Dance Religion of the American Indian appeared in 1896. In his introduction, Mooney writes, "The main

¹ Franz Boas, "Preface" in Franz Boas and Ella Deloria, Dakota Grammar, Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences, XXIII, 2nd. Memoir, 1939, p. vii.

² James Owen Dorsey, A Study of Siouan Cults (Seattle: The Shorey Book Store Facsimile Reproduction, 1972), p. 365.

³ Dorsey, pp. 362-363.

purpose of the work is not linguistic, and as nearly every tribe concerned speaks a different language from all others, any close linguistic study must be left to the philologist, who can afford to devote a year or more to an individual tribe. The only one of these tribes of which the author claims intimate knowledge is the Kiowa." Mooney's Lakota informants include American Horse, Fire Thunder, and George Sword - all of the Pine Ridge reservation.¹ With the exception of some words and phrases, Mooney does not include the Lakota texts of his informants.

In 1917, the American Museum of Natural History, published the "The Sun Dance and Other Ceremonies of the Oglala Division of the Teton Dakota" by J.R. Walker. Walker was a physician at the Pine Ridge Agency who became close friends with many of the religious leaders. Although he did consult with other informants, much of Walker's information was derived from George Sword. Sword, an Oglala, was a member of the Indian police at the Pine Ridge Agency in the 1890's. Although he could neither speak nor write in English, he wrote pages and pages in old Lakota using the phonetic forms. Walker wrote of him, "He was a man of marked ability with a philosophical trend far beyond the average Oglala."² Much of what is known about the societies, mythology and religion of the Teton before white contact is derived from the Sword manuscripts.

Another very important study published by the Bureau of Ethnology was Frances Densmore's Teton Sioux Music in 1918. Densmore recorded the words to some Lakota songs in the native language, but most of her text is in English. Listed as informants by Densmore are Robert Higheagle, a graduate of Hampton, and Mrs. James McLaughlin, the Dakota speaking wife of Major McLaughlin at Standing Rock and many singers from Standing Rock.³

Because of the depression in the 1930's and changes in federal government policies toward Indians, funds to the Bureau of Ethnology

¹ James Mooney, The Ghost Dance Religion (Glorieta, NM : Rio Grande Press, 1973), pp. 654-655.

² J. R. Walker, "Introduction" to "The Sun Dance and Other Ceremonies of the Oglala Division of the Teton Dakota." Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History (XVI, II, 1917), 51.

³ Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music (New York : De Capo Press, 1972), p. v.

ceased in 1932. Nevertheless, the reports written for the Bureau contain a wealth of information about the Sioux. Even though scholars did not include the original language versions in their publications, many of the manuscripts are preserved in the Museum collection.

Research in Indian languages entered a new phase in the 1930's under the direction of Franz Boas of Columbia University. In the introduction to the Handbook of American Indian Languages published in 1911 by the Bureau of American Ethnology, Boas gives a "clear statement of fundamental theory and of basic methodological principles which demonstrate the inadequacy of the old methods and point to new paths of research which were to lead to impressive results." Basically Boas stressed that thorough knowledge of the language was the key to understanding everything else. ". . . we must insist that a command of the language is an indispensable means of obtaining accurate and thorough knowledge, because much information can be gained by listening to conversations of the natives and by taking part in their daily life, which to the observer who has no command of the language, will remain inaccessible."¹

Boas was conversant in Dakota and Lakota, but he trusted more to the authority of the native speaker than to the linguist. In 1929, Boas offered Ella Deloria a position as Dakota language researcher in ethnology and linguistics in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University.

Ella Deloria was born in 1888 in the White Swan district of the Yankton reservation. Soon after her birth, her mother returned to the Standing Rock reservation to rejoin her husband, the Rev. Philip Deloria, the Episcopal missionary to St. Elizabeth's Mission near Wakpala, SD.

In 1889, a year after Ella was born, Sitting Bull and his followers returned from Canada and settled down on the Grand River about 30 miles west of the mission. There was a great deal of anxiety on the reservation at that time. The transition from a free hunting society to one of farming and ranching was a difficult one. Ella's father travelled to other reservations to assist with missionary efforts to establish schools. According to the customs of her people, she was cared for by a circle of

¹ Franz Boas, "Introduction" Handbook of American Indian Languages (Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 57.

grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins living near the mission. Many were apprehensive about the presence of so many soldiers at the agency in Fort Yates and so preferred to live in quieter communities clustered along the creeks and rivers. Ella and her sister and brother often stayed in her grandmother's tipi near the mission and grew to love the stories and legends of the elders.

Many years later she wrote about the abrupt changes brought about by the reservation system. "It gathered its forces out of sight, and it sneaked up on the people in a surprise attack that caught them entirely unprepared. Suddenly it struck. It struck hard - in the mass slaughter of the buffalo, in the Custer fight, in the killing of Sitting Bull, and finally in that ghastly incident at Wounded Knee in 1890, when innocent men, women, and children were massacred. Those were the decisive blows, the death - dealing shafts hurled in Teton Dakota life, the final reason for change." ¹

Ella grew up among a large circle of friends and relatives, speaking the Dakota dialect of her parents and the Lakota dialect of the Hunkpapa of their many friends and relatives. The Riggs and Williamson books were her first textbooks. As teachers from the east arrived at the mission, she learned to speak and write in English as well. She was intelligent, eager to learn, and had a natural faculty for language learning. After completing secondary school at All Saints School in Sioux Falls, Deloria studied at Oberlin College and finally at Columbia University (1913-1914). ²

After graduating from Columbia, she returned to South Dakota and taught for a time at St. Elizabeth's and All Saint's School. In 1928, she was teaching at Haskell Institute at Lawrence, Kansas, when she was contacted by Dr. Franz Boas. Her position at Haskell was not particularly satisfying, so she agreed to accept the offer to become a researcher. Boas proposed that she divide her time between field research among the Dakotas and translating manuscripts at Columbia.

Dr. Boas, the founder of linguistic and anthropological studies of the American Indian, was an exacting scholar and not an easy person to

¹ Ella Deloria, Speaking of Indians (New York : Friendship Press, 1944), p.

² Janette K. Murray, Ella Deloria : A Biographical Sketch and Literary Analysis Unpublished dissertation, University of North Dakota, 1974.

please. According to Ruth Bunzel who worked with Ella Deloria at Columbia, Boas was a very demanding professor. After a few introductory lectures on methods, students were sent into the field to do research. There were no special allowances made for those who were beginners or those with a defective background. Boas could be "prickly, unbinding, often intolerant." He was scornful of disagreements and stupidity. He valued his own autonomy greatly but was often high-handed with his students. "He arranged field trips for them without consulting them; he schemed and maneuvered to get them positions and was deeply hurt when they refused to accept his arrangements. But he never wavered in his loyalty to them, even when he disapproved of them." ¹

Boas gave his students credit for the work they did. He encouraged them to publish their own work under their own names.

Ella Deloria wrote three major publications and numerous articles and speeches. Dakota Texts, published in 1932, is a collection of 64 legends in three dialects - Dakota, Lakota, and Assiniboiné - with literal and free translations. It is still the only book of its kind. Dakota Grammar, first published in 1939, is 175 pages of grammatical analysis of the Dakota language in the categories of phonetics, morphology and syntax. Although there are other grammars, this is the only one written by a native speaker which describes the language in terms of its own structure rather than using the English categories as a basis. Speaking of Indians, published in 1944, is a sociological and cultural history of the Yankton tribe from pre-reservation days to the 1940's.

In addition to her published works, Deloria's manuscripts include tales, legends and stories collected over a period of 40 years on the Sioux reservations in South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana and Canada. She recorded more than 5,000 individual entrees with origins and dialectic differences for a dictionary. She also contributed her information and expertise to a number of other scholars and anthropologists.

¹ Ruth Bunzel, "Franz Boas," in The Golden Age of American Anthropology, eds. Margaret Mead and Ruth Bunzel (New York : George Braziller, 1960), p. 404.

Because the purpose of these introductory lessons is to learn to speak Lakota, the emphasis will be on sound and meaning. The tapes are your primary learning tool; nevertheless, the written lessons will be useful for practice.

The orthography used in these lessons is that used in Buechel's dictionary. As you examine other Lakota written works, you will see that the writing systems are somewhat different. The orthography used by Ella Deloria in Dakota Texts, for example, has a great many diacritical marks including symbols representing primary and secondary accents. Modern writers of Lakota tend to use a minimum of diacritics.

As you listen to the tape for Lesson I, concentrate on learning the sounds, but also notice how the sounds are represented by the written symbols.

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