



meeting ground

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D Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian History

Compiled by: Laurie Arnold

Remembering Beatrice Medicine and Vine Deloria Jr.



From the Director

For those of us solidly ensconced in middle age, coming to terms with transitions, of the generational type, is familiar territory, and indeed cause for reflection. As we seek to make sense of the contributions of our elders, we also contemplate ways to build upon their substantial accomplishments. It is a healthy thing, even if not always so comfortable.

Just as this is true in our personal lives, so too is it the case in the professional domain. In the past months, in fact, we have lost a number of eminent scholars, each of whom shaped what we know as American Indian Studies.

While we at the Center seek to remember every passing--and sadly sometimes fail to do so in a timely or effective manner--it is incumbent upon us to pause, and take special notice, on certain occasions. The recent deaths of Vine Deloria, Jr., and Beatrice Medicine compel this kind of remembrance, and our meager efforts here should be understood as opportunity to consider the many who so recently have departed.

This special edition of the *Meeting Ground* is dedicated to the memory of two American Indian scholar-activists through whose lives we can begin to understand that combination of academic research and devotion to American Indian cause and communities that provides American Indian studies with its unique vitality. In the course of long careers, Bea Medicine and Vine Deloria influenced the shape of our fields, and in ways that will be long lasting, indeed permanent. Just how profound the influence, and deep the admiration was evident in the outpouring of reflections that followed news of their passing.

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It is in the spirit of collecting and sharing that we present the following reflections, compiled by McNickle Center Assistant Director Laurie Arnold. All are offered unedited, and are the contributions of individuals whose professional lives took them to and through the Newberry. This is appropriate, for the Center too owes a great deal to Medicine and Deloria. Bea Medicine first arrived at the Library in 1973 as a member of the first class of research fellows affiliated with the brand-new Center for the History of the American Indian. Our newsletter from the fall of 1974 describes her work as centering on a study of the economic, social and religious systems of the western Lakota with particular attention to women's activities and women's roles as socializers for change, especially in the transition to the reservation period.

Dr. Medicine returned to the Newberry from time to time through the years, notably in 1995 as a speaker for the Center's Construction of Gender symposium, and finally in 2004 when she offered personal perspectives on the early years of the Center in an event associated with the annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory.

Vine Deloria's most recent public appearance came in connection with events commemorating the Center's 25th Anniversary when he delivered the keynote address entitled "The Futures of American Indian Histories."

Employing his unique mix of mordant wit and no-holds-barred commentary, wrote former McNickle Center Director Craig Howe, Deloria critiqued various approaches to American Indian History and then offered some corrections for their shortcomings.

But of course, Vine Deloria's impact upon the Center was far greater than one address. In a real way, he challenged all of us to embrace the full complexity of our mission. We are here to nurture high quality scholarship in American Indian studies, it is true, and we exist to promote the use of the Newberry's matchless collections, to be certain. But we also have a responsibility to link the work of academics with real life concerns of native peoples and communities, and to promote the development of a responsible and responsive scholarship. And thanks to Bea Medicine, Vine Deloria, and so many others, we have examples to follow.

Brian Hosmer, Director



Craig Howe Former Director, The D'Arcy McNickle Center

The deaths of Beatrice Medicine and Vine Deloria, Jr. created a chasm in Native studies that may take centuries to bridge. Still, we have to continue. Both were Native South Dakotans, a fact of pride for most Indians from our state. Moreover, Vine's hometown and mine is the same: Martin, a town bordering the Pine Ridge reservation. Another border town is Lemmon, South Dakota, which is adjacent to the Standing Rock reservation, and Vine's family also spent a considerable amount of time there. I mention these towns and connections because they provide context for the following Newberry anecdotes.

Very early in my tenure at the McNickle Center, we hosted an NEH summer seminar during which Aunt Bea was a presenter. At some point, I was asked to put my email address on the board and a female participant asked what "hoksila" meant. Aunt Bea immediately replied: handsome young man. The word literally means boy, but for some reason she translated it otherwise with a knowing glance and a smile. She must have figured that I needed all the help I could get.

A couple of years later, we invited Vine to be the keynote speaker at the McNickle Center's 25th anniversary conference and celebration. He surprised a number of long-term staff members by not only accepting the invitation, but by showing up and then delivering a provocative talk that was both eloquent and humorous, one highlight being a slightly risqué joke featuring Father Peter Powell. He prefaced his talk by saying to the standing room-only audience: I don't know why Craig invited me to speak, because when I finish, he will probably get fired. He then turned toward me and added: But don't worry; we will take my honorarium and open a Starbucks in Martin. He then delivered an incisive critique of American Indian history writers, including commentary about many who were in the audience.

During the question and answer period following his talk, Vine was asked what he would do if he won the lottery. Hesitating only a moment, he replied: Buy the town of Lemmon, South Dakota and burn it to the ground. Later that fall, McNickle Center staff members drove through Lemmon during our fieldwork for the hypermedia tribal histories project. Vine was highly amused by the picture we sent him of us holding lighters with flames flickering beneath the Welcome to Lemmon sign on the western edge of town.

Now as I sift through my memories for remembrances of Bea and Vine, their absence is nearly overwhelming. They stand tall. Their shadows stretch from South Dakota to the D'Arcy McNickle Center, and across American Indian studies and beyond. Countless generations will measure themselves in relation to Bea and Vine. And their legacies, I believe, are more than sufficient motivation for us to continue to do the best we can.

Tributes to Vine Deloria and Bea Medicine

by Jay Miller, Coordinator, American Indian [sic] Studies The Ohio State University

Dammed Indians (1982) is how many of us learned how Vine Deloria, Jr., felt about the Newberry, as blasted at the end of his Foreword. After the magical telling of his great grandfather Saswe's selection of a safe burial site and the smug evils of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Pick-Sloan boondoggle of \$28,000,000,000 to dam the Missouri, and the bungling collusion of the BIA, he mentions his account of a job interview for a 1975 Newberry staff position as the token Indian.

Though it sounds even stranger now that we are in the 21st century, Vine's recommendation to add more relevancy to the McNickle Center was to microfilm the records of Midwestern tribal councils for safekeeping and research. Instead, his advice was taken as a threat and greeted with haughty anger and utter stupidity since no one in their right mind would consider the twentieth century to be history yet. His departing view was of a frozen smile that would air condition southwestern deserts for many centuries. Ranking his opinions of both historians and Congress as not high, Vine ended with a plea that the reading and writing of history be returned to those who truly experienced it.

Thus, as was his style, to make his point all the more interesting, Vine skillfully combined and heightened the rhetorics of theology and law to confront scholars and readers with important issues. In the process, he took on the practitioners of history, philosophy, anthropology, archaeology, and the morals of daily life. He argued in terms of dramatic points, though not always with full disclosure of background issues. His sidestepping of the career of his aunt Ella Deloria, as anthropologist, linguist, and Franz Boas collaborator is particularly perplexing. Her volumes of research materials in her native language, along with a host of scholarly and entertaining publications contribute to Deloria pride and service. To his credit, Vine continued to stick by his remarks even as he spoke that the McNickle 25th Anniversary within the Newberry's walls.

Not much had really changed. Such oversights or amnesiac episodes reappear in the Humanities, where those in History and English now pride themselves on presenting the postcolonial native voice and rebalancing the record. Instead, they should begin (pro forma) with the proper admission that they (following their own academic predecessors) were the ones who got it wrong in the first place. With the smugness of fresh converts, they forge ahead without asking pardon or setting themselves in larger perspective.

In this light, the career of Bea Medicine is even more informative. She too followed a family tradition of commitment and excellence, leaving the Dakotas to enter college at Seattle. These were exciting times among anthropology faculty and students and her classmates included other natives, who went on to jobs outside academia, particularly in the arts. Later, in Chicago and Madison, she continued her leading roles and mentored many. Her strong opinion about what constituted exploiting students helps account for her lack of a trained up heir. She had definite likes and dislikes, very much in the Lakota mold. Like Vine, as a Native scholar she was recruited to the Newberry, but unlike him she accepted a fellowship, though never without many reservations. Only when settled in and allowed behind the scenes does the Newberry become a humane institution.

Above all, though, it was Bea's humor that is easiest to recollect. She was extremely funny in the best of circumstances, particularly at parties. At gatherings at Ray Fogelson's, the most neutral of the Chicago meeting grounds, she was especially witty and charming. Her son was an artist in Chicago so she was frequently there, well involved with the native community and sometimes willing to join Newberry events.

Frozen-in-time, anachronistic, and privileged are words that have all been used, especially by Natives fearful of their welcome, to describe the Newberry at various times, yet it is and continues to be a superb archive and research center of world class. It is not there for the here and now, except as findings and insights drawn from its documents help to inform and correct contemporary ills. The passing of Vine, Bea, Alfonso, and others should further our commitment to getting the record right, both for the past and the future, in as many ways as possible, admitting our mistakes and learning from them.



Bea Medicine speaks
to a small group in
the Newberry
Library's Towner
Fellow's Hall

Beatrice Medicine: A Strong Lakota Woman, Pioneering Anthropologist, and Dedicated Mentor

Writing about Bea Medicine brings back over thirty years of memories. We first met in 1973, when she was a member of the first group of post-doctoral fellows at the D Arcy McNickle Center. During that year, we often talked about her unhappiness with how Newberry dealt with Native scholars and its lack of connections to the Chicago Indian community. Later Bea returned to Newberry to give lectures and to co-lead, with Patricia Albers, Brenda Child, and Ray Fogelson, an NEH seminar at Newberry on Construction of Gender and the Experience of American Indian Societies (1996), one of the two NEH programs on Indian Voices in the Academy.

Since childhood, Bea has been a natural teacher and dedicated mentor. She enjoyed telling the story that as a youngster, she gathered her siblings into a shed on her family's land in order to teach them what she had learned in school, whether they liked it or not. Once, a big snake crawled into the classroom, and Bea exclaimed, Class dismissed, and quickly herded her surprised class out the door.

Before becoming a renowned anthropologist, Bea worked as a home economics teacher, health education lecturer, research assistant, counselor, psychiatric social worker, and oral historian. She mentored students and scholars at the many institutions. In *Learning to Be an Anthropologist and Remaining Native*, Bea writes that she could not seem to cast off the indispensable mother role, which has proved counterproductive to my own professional development. She also jokes about her multi-institutional career: as far as moving so often is concerned, I jokingly refer to the former nomadism of my people. More recently, I have utilized a pan-Indian joke: Sioux are just like empty beer cans, you find them everywhere. (12). Her research interests in American Indian studies included women's issues, bilingual education, alcohol and drug use and abuse, ethno-methodologies and research needs, and socialization of children and identity needs. As her many awards, fellowships, and visiting professorships attest, Bea was an active researcher whose scholarship exemplified how to do anthropological studies from an emic perspective. Her scholarly career has not ended with her passing. In December, 2006, AltaMira Press will publish her *An Ethnography of Drinking and Sobriety among the Lakota Sioux*.

Bea also had a strong interest in the arts and literature. She was justly proud of the success that her son, Ted Garner, achieved as a sculptor. Not only did she love to read fiction, but she also wrote poetry throughout her life. Among her papers is an unpublished volume of her poems.

In addition to being a scholar, Bea was also a tireless worker with Native communities and students in North America. During her McNickle fellowship year and many subsequent visits to Chicago, Bea participated in programs in the American Indian community and made life-long friendships. She was particularly active in Native American Education Services College, teaching sessions, counseling staff, and speaking at conferences. She always was very warm in her interactions with Chicago Indians and kept up with developments in the community. In turn, Native friends here held her in very high esteem.

On the Standing Rock Reservation, she served on the Pardon Board and the School Board of Wakpala Public School. Bea devoted much time and effort to establishing this school. She greatly enjoyed visiting classes to talk to the students about Lakota culture and history and to encourage them to complete their education. The children enjoyed these visits, especially when she distributed the shampoos and soaps she collected from hotels during her frequent travels. Conscious of her obligations to reservation elders, Bea used to take them batches of her home-made soup.

She was an indefatigable correspondent who was famous for her post cards, every square inch of which was crammed with news. My favorites were those from Chinatown in San Francisco, which featured a recipe for a Kahl a martini. Ted told me that she wrote most of these cards while waiting in airports.

Bea received two honors in the months before her last illness. In response to my urging, the Chicago Humanities Festival invited her to lecture on Never Away from Home on 5 November 2005. Although she was very, very weak, Bea stood throughout her spirited talk and had a wonderful time. She was thrilled to receive Mike Conklin's praise in the 7 November 2005 issue of the Chicago Tribune: [Beatrice] Medicine, a distinguished and feisty 82-year-old Lakota writer and anthropologist, enthralled her audience for more than an hour with insights into the Indian . . . Her last letter to me, dated 9 December 2005, was full of her zest for life: I'm amazed that I have lived to be 80 plus and asked for 7 years while I was in my surgical trance when they wanted the heart man. She also wrote that she had a great time at the meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in Washington, DC, in December 2005. There she received the George and Louise Spindler Award for Education in Anthropology: Besides getting the Spindler Award, I was crowned Matriarch of the Association of Mutant Anthropologists --a dissident group of American Indians, Chicanos/Chicanas, and supportive white Anthros. Her achievements will live on in her publications and in the memories of her family and friends, who miss her strong voice on Indian issues, perceptive scholarship, warm support, and wonderful sense of fun.

Farewell, dear and loving friend.

A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff

Professor emerita of English, University of Illinois at Chicago, and former interim director of the D Arcy McNickle Center, The Newberry Library



D Arcy McNickle (center) and Silvester John Brito, Fred McTaggart, Beatrice Medicine. Center Fellows 1974

Bea Medicine
 By Fred Hoxie, Swanlund Professor of History
 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
 Former Director, D Arcy McNickle Center
 Former Vice President of Research and Education, The Newberry Library

Thirty years ago when I was finishing my pre-dissertation fellowship year at the Newberry and preparing to defend my thesis, I was asked by the U.S. Department of Justice to explore the historical circumstances surrounding a series of early twentieth-century homestead acts that affected the Sioux reservations in North and South Dakota. A group of white South Dakotans had challenged the boundaries of several of the state's reservations on the basis of those acts. The best way to counter that assertion was to find out what members of those tribes understood about the legislation. Did they believe at the time that their reservations were being diminished?

Responding to the Justice Department's request required me to leave the government documents that had formed the basis for my dissertation (later published as *A Final Promise*), and plunge into the local history of two of these reservations, Cheyenne River and Standing Rock. Bea Medicine was a crucial mentor for me in that process. Bea had been a fellow at the Newberry a few years before I was, and while she was never shy about criticizing the Library for not doing enough for Indian people, she was always a dedicated supporter of the Center's fellows and programs. From the moment I presented myself at her front door in Madison, Wisconsin, she began giving me instructions about how to carry out my research assignment. She pointed me to sources in the archives and introduced me to contacts in Wakpala, the Standing Rock community where she grew up. Within weeks I was traveling around the reservation with my tape recorder, gathering materials from the local courthouse, and compiling notes from the files of the local newspaper. I couldn't have done any of it without Bea's direction and I couldn't have made much sense of it without her encouragement.

Over the following three decades Bea never failed to respond to my requests for advice or invitations to participate in conferences and seminars. I always admired her integrity and fearlessness. Like Vine, she was such a constant presence in our field that it is hard to imagine how we can carry on without her. But when I recall how generously and how firmly she pushed me forward into uncharted waters so many years ago, I know that she would encourage us to press on and would remind us that we all have a responsibility to help each other by sharing our knowledge and our gifts.

Mark Trahan
 Seattle Post-Intelligencer

The last time I had a long conversation with Vine Deloria Jr. was at the Newberry Library. The occasion was the 25th anniversary and we were both supposed to give talks. He put me on the defensive almost immediately, I think teasing, asking me, "So what is the Indian intellectual going to say today?" I wasn't expecting that--and I tried to regain my balance. I told him my talk was about how journalists cover American Indian issues. We mostly discussed science that morning, including some ideas raised in book, *Red Earth, White Lies*. The most interesting part of our chat was the notion that we could do a better job of holding science to its own standards.

I was supposed to speak in the afternoon, but the ideas that Vine raised were so profound that I found a quiet space, ripped up my prepared text and started rewriting. My theme evolved into a thesis about holding journalism to its highest standards when writing about American Indian issues.

I talked about the Hutchins Commission, a group of white, male scholars, who concluded in 1947 that the press had an obligation to provide context when writing about what it termed "constituent groups." There's no group, perhaps, that's more in need of journalism context than American Indian issues.

The Hutchins Commission wrote: "The account of an isolated fact, however accurate in itself, may be misleading and, in effect, untrue. ... The country has many groups which are partially insulated from one another and which need to be interpreted to one another. Factually correct but substantially untrue accounts of the behaviors of members of one of these social islands can intensify the antagonisms of others toward them. A single incident will be accepted as a sample group action unless the press has given a flow of information and interpretation concerning the relations between two racial groups such as to enable the reader to set a single event in its proper perspective. If allowed to pass as a sample of such action, the requirement that the press present an accurate account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning has not been met."

Most of us recall news stories about Indian Country that were factually correct, but substantially untrue. And yet the printing of these stories (or broadcast reports) reinforces what people think they know. Over time, these accounts pass for sample actions that misinform the general readers. This standard of context adds a new meaning for journalism when we think about the complexity of issues coming from native communities. Water rights, gaming, crime and justice, you name the issue and it is one with deep roots growing in many directions. Journalists, if we are to meet our own high standards, have to get better at following those roots in order to completely tell the story with adequate context.

After I talked, I was humbled by the reassuring approval I received from Vine. But I wasn't through learning that day. Vine's speech was about American Indian history and suggested historians pay attention to Peter Iverson. Deloria praised the book, *When Indians Became Cowboys* because Iverson focused the history on single topic, explored it thoroughly, and then clearly communicated with the reader. Deloria suggested that this is an approach that other historians should try.

I think the same could be said about journalists, too.



A Reminiscence of Vine Deloria, Jr. Clara Sue Kidwell Native American Studies The University of Oklahoma

Into each life a truly remarkable person will come. Indians have been blessed above all other people. Indians have had Vine Deloria, Jr. For those of us in the academic world of American Indian Studies, he largely made it possible for us to teach the courses and develop the programs that we have today. He showed us the possibilities of intellectual activism within the academy. Vine's explication of tribal sovereignty gave us a way of thinking about the status of Indian tribes in

contemporary society. His book, *God is Red*, gave us ways of thinking about the connection between Indian identity and Indian land, a connection which he felt and defended passionately. His eloquent *Amicus Curiae* brief in the Bear Lodge (Devil's Tower) case confronted head on the intellectual challenge of defending matters of belief against the logical constructs of the law.

Although Vine's training was in law and theology, and he made his initial reputation as a polemicist, he was also a superb historian who insisted on truth and delighted in puncturing facile generalizations. His article "Revision and Reversion" in Calvin Martin's edited anthology, *The Problems of American Indian History* challenged the generalization that has become a truism in Indian country even today, that the United States government broke every treaty it ever made with an Indian tribe. With Clifford Lytle, in *The Nations Within*, he pointed out that although the Indian Reorganization Act restored Indian land and supported self-government, its consequences were not wholly benign. Its provisions for economic development could ultimately be seen as a precursor to the government's termination policy of the 1950s.

When the McNickle Center celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary and honored Vine among a number of other Indian intellectual leaders, it was a proud moment for all of us in the audience. I think that event marked a recognition and affirmation that scholarship on American Indian history, literature, and cultures has come of age in the academy. Vine's recognition by national professional and academic organizations as a scholar and a spokesman for Indian issues gave credibility to American Indian scholars. The American Anthropological Association asked him to give keynote speeches, and the Western History Association invited him to special sessions. He was part of the mainstream, and others of us were drawn along into the currents.

At the same time, Vine reveled in his role as the curmudgeon and gadfly. It is rather ironic that a man who made his reputation by poking holes in academic arguments and pretensions and denouncing anthropologists would be a keynote speaker at a national AAA meeting. Perhaps it was because he was not afraid to carry the academic battles into the enemy camp, and he did it with both bravura and intellectual substance.

Despite the prickly persona, Vine was among the most generous people I have known. He was endlessly encouraging to students and young scholars. He played a significant role in many careers through his involvement with the Western Social Sciences Association's Indian section. He wrote endless forewords and introductions for books. He talked to innumerable graduate students and mentored the careers of many. He urged us all to write and publish more.

Above all, Vine never took himself too seriously. Among my fond memories of him are a collection of corny jokes, some of which I occasionally inflict on my friends. His weapon of choice was satire, not polemic. He seemed to delight in the absurdities of Indian politics because they gave him fodder for his sense of humor--the 5th grade math lesson in the tribally controlled school: 5 days per diem @ \$50 per day. I will remember his laugh as much as the very profound things he had to say about the significance of tribal sovereignty and Indian spirituality. There is, I think, a profound connection between humor and the sacred. Humor confronts us with the unexpected and makes us think about things in a different way. The encounter with the unexpected in the natural environment can give us a glimpse of the sacred. An encounter with a truly original thinker can inspire insights and new understandings of complex problems. Vine Deloria, Jr. had that kind of mind, and we were enriched by his life and can be sustained by his memory.

In Remembrance: Vine Deloria, Jr. By Harvey DuMarce Vice President for Academic Affairs Sisseton Wahpeton College

I never once crossed paths with Vine Deloria, Jr. throughout my years as a college undergraduate, as a graduate student, or later as an educator. It would have been good if we shook hands even in passing. Yet, he was an omnipresent intellectual force in my education like an enduring thought, like a stimulating idea that grabs hold of your imagination and will not let go. In spite of this, we still did eventually meet at a crossroads in a familial sort of way.

His father Vine Sr. was a close friend of my late father-in-law Felix Renville, Sr. when he was an Episcopal minister in the 1950s serving on the Lake Traverse Reservation in northeast South Dakota. Both of these elders were marvelous story tellers in the tradition of Dakota orators. My mother-in-law Caroline Renville says both of the men often referred to one another as brother or cousin.

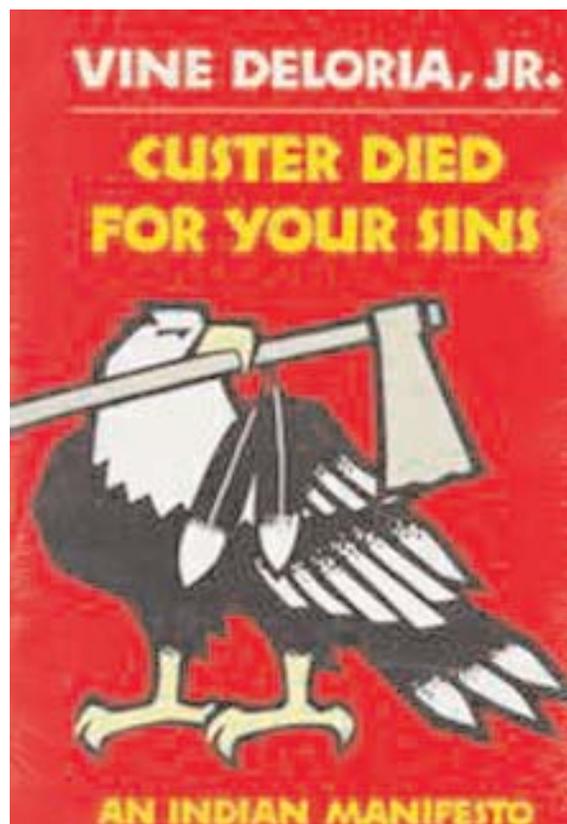
In retrospect, I traveled through the crossroads of modern movements and ideas in the world of Indian affairs that Vine Deloria was pivotal to. In the fall of 1965, my brother Gerald and I were sent out by the Bureau of Indian Affairs on relocation to the bay area of San Francisco. I was fresh out of high school and never been off the reservation in my entire young life. At that time, California was just an idea not a place for me. Those persons who returned to the reservation after their brief relocation experience referred to California as simply the West Coast. Instead of my assimilation into the proverbial melting pot of mainstream America as the BIA wished would happen, I begin to walk a new road on a journey that continues today.

This new path led me away from the expectations of the BIA. I began to read books. I turned away from the dead end job the Bureau found for me and struck out on my own in the Bay Area of San Francisco. One of the first books that I read was *Custer Died for Your Sins*. Some of the topics Vine Deloria wrote of in his book, I knew about already from growing up on the reservation. I knew about our wonderful sense of Indian humor he wrote so concisely about. What his book did was to reaffirm and clarify, in part, the validity of my experience within the scheme of America. It also gave me a sense of hope that the new journey I was on was going to lead to something better.

The writings of Vine Deloria were an integral part of my coming of age in the 1970s not in the physical way but more in a cultural and intellectual sense. He was required reading for some of us at UC Berkeley along with our embrace of militant politics of the time. I read books by black writers such as *Soul on Ice* and *Manchild in the Promise Land* and saw the parallels between them and his work; themes of cultural renewal, identity, and righteous anger toward this country's treatment of oppress people. But he also made us feel good about being American Indian in spite of this country's historical antipathy toward our cultures. At the same time, his writings were like a breath of fresh air in the field of Indian affairs which was populated by those persons who would be characterized later as dead old white men.

Vine Deloria was like our Socrates sitting around the Parthenon asking difficult questions about ourselves, those complex questions about what it ultimately means to be American Indian in a time when many white people saw us through stereotypical lens. Through his writings and intellectual force, we begin to peel away the layers of distortions, lies, and misconceptions about our collective place in the great scheme of life. We begin to see the complexity, the intelligence, and the richness in the lives of our ancestors, those who gave up so much so we can live today.

Perhaps the greatest contribution that Vine Deloria body of work gave to American Indians of my generation was the need to question and probe the pantheon of modern Indian life; to be able to look back to tradition but also to look to the future with optimism; to look at ourselves and America through a lens of critical inquiry. Sometimes the answers to our seemingly perplexing array of questions before us lay not too far away; sometimes they're right on the reservation where we begin.



Deloria Memoriam

By Rebecca Monte Kugel

I first read *Custer Died For Your Sins* as a teenager just becoming aware of the gap between the staid, uncontroversial history I learned in my school textbooks and the daily reality of life in the tumultuous late 1960s. I think I appreciated his sense of irony and his jokes more than I actually understood the larger arguments he was making, but one of his stories stood out in my mind. Deloria told of an elderly man reminiscing about a time when he and a group of friends were surrounded by a superior enemy force. He deliberately set up the story in the manner of a classic pioneer tale, the kind that was very familiar to those of us who grew up watching television during the decade when cowboy shows ruled the networks (think *Bonanza*, *Gunsmoke*, *Wagon Train* and *Rawhide*, among others). One could easily envision the sturdy little wagon train drawn up in a circle. Deloria detailed how the small, brave group was hemmed in, low on water and food supplies and down to the last of their ammunition. They were almost despairing when all of a sudden they heard the welcoming sounds of rescue: it was war whoops. Talk about looking at history from another angle! Deloria's tale had been told from a Native perspective, neatly and iconoclastically turning the tables so that the familiar sound of the bugler's horn that announced the cavalry riding to the rescue was placed in a whole new light. For Native peoples, of course, the cavalry was decidedly not riding to the rescue. *Custer Died* was full of such refracted angles of vision and it was my first introduction to the idea that historical narratives and historical memory were deeply contested terrain. It was exciting and it certainly encouraged me to think of history as something that I could claim for my intellectual own. Was it Deloria who inspired me to go on to college and then graduate school and become what was at the time called an Indian historian? No, and wouldn't he have skewered such a presumptuous comment! But he was the first Native intellectual whose work I read and I've thought seriously about the many things he's said for forty years now.

And here is something he said that I still think about. Deloria's critique of the academic *Friends of the Indian* was particularly trenchant. His portrayal of self-serving anthropologists has become iconic--indeed, my kids grew up singing along with songs such as *Here Come the Anthros* on Floyd Westerman's tribute album as we trundled about the streets of suburban Los Angeles--but as a historian, and a Native historian at that, I think we *histos* have laughed too much at the poor anthropologists' expense. We are not blameless, either. All too often we still write history as though Native people didn't matter. Where are Native peoples mentioned in the 20th century U.S. history survey course, for instance? Deloria called us on this, too, accusing us of writing *contribution history*, where we (and I paraphrase him here) lovingly plucked a few woolly heads, sombreros and feathers into the American master narrative of triumphant expansion and progress, but we never questioned the accuracy of that narrative itself. And although he is better known for calling anthropologists to task, his more profound challenge is, I believe, directed at historians. He challenged us to think about the many other ways of knowing history, to consider the many types of evidence beside the written text, to recognize the validity of knowledge systems other than our own. Whether we are Native or non-Native, established academics or new young scholars fresh from grad school, I hope we continue to rise to the challenge that he set for us to reconstruct the past in ways that are multifaceted and multi-vocal.

Vine Deloria Jr.

By Fred Hoxie, Swanlund Professor of History University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Volumes have been (and will be) written about Vine Deloria Jr.'s contributions to American intellectual life and his place in the pantheon of Native thinkers (some of it by me). The consensus will be that in the fields of American Indian Studies, contemporary cultural and religious life, and the politics of indigenous peoples, he was one of the most important thinkers of our time. His ideas mattered.

But as we celebrate his ideas, let's not forget that the ideas penetrated so deeply and were heard by so many because of his enormous personality and his forceful voice and character. Let one small incident support this assertion. Fifteen years ago, in a conference room in midtown Manhattan, at the beginning of the first meeting of the newly-appointed Board of Trustees of the National Museum of the American Indian, a representative of the Smithsonian Institution's central administration passed out a document entitled, *By Laws* and told us these would be the rules governing our new organization. Vine immediately began asking questions. Who wrote these rules?

Why did the rules not include a list of board committees? Why did the rules fail to include a statement of institutional purpose?

Why were the powers of the trustees not specified in these rules? As the neatly-dressed official fumbled for answers, other trustees joined in. No one could provide very clear answers to our questions. Suddenly an embarrassed silence fell over the room. Vine leaned over to the person next to him and declared in his gravelly voice--just loud enough for everyone to hear--things just haven't been the same since the Duke died. As the room erupted into laughter, the point was made: don't give us precooked by-laws; don't dictate to us what this institution is going to be. I recalled the title to one of his books: *We Talk; You Listen*. It was a great moment. I remember it whenever I think of Vine.

Selected Publications by Vine Deloria, Jr.

Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties; an Indian declaration of independence. New York: Delacorte Press, 1974.

Custer died for your sins; an Indian manifesto. New York: Macmillan, 1969.

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Participants in the 1995 seminar The Construction of Gender and the Experience of Women in American Indian Societies.
Bea Medicine, bottom row, second from left.



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