



NMSU Library News Release

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Ann Nolan Clark Featured in NMSU Library Presentation

A program about New Mexico writer Ann Nolan Clark, presented by Jeanne Whitehouse Peterson, will be held at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 22, 2000, on the second floor east of NMSU's Branson Library. The event is sponsored by the Library's Special Collections in conjunction with the Border Book Festival. The Library's Ann Nolan Clark Collection was a gift from Joe and Diana Stein, owners of La Galeria de Los Artesanos in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and literary executors for Clark's estate. The collection contains more than 70 items, including first printings of many of Clark's bilingual textbooks published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Jeanne Whitehouse Peterson has taught courses in children's literature and language arts through the University of New Mexico for the past twenty years. She received a Ph.D. in American Studies from UNM in 1987, and her dissertation topic was "Ann Nolan Clark: A Contextual Biography." Peterson has written several books for children, including *My Mama Sings* (Harper Collins, 1994).

Ann Nolan Clark was born in Las Vegas, New Mexico, in 1896. After attending New Mexico Highlands University, she began twenty-five years of service with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1923 as a teacher at the Black Rock School in Zuni. During the next 17 years she taught in various schools serving Native American children in the Southwest. Realizing that the children in the BIA schools did not have adequate instructional materials, she began writing her own, many of them bilingual. The U.S. Office of Indian Affairs published fifteen of her books between 1940 and 1951. In 1962 Clark retired from the Department of the Interior and received its highest award for service with the BIA as a teacher, a writer of textbooks for Indian schools, and a school supervisor. She also served as a teacher and writer for the State Department and the U.S. Department of Education in Latin America. She died in 1995.

Clark wrote numerous books about children in different parts of the world. She received the Newbery

Medal in 1953 for *Secret of the Andes*, set in Peru. In 1963 she received the Regina Medal from the Catholic Library Association for “continued distinguished contributions to literature for children.” For three decades, from 1930 to 1960, her articles were published in *New Mexico Magazine*. All of her writings were based on personal experience, and Clark gave credit to her “grandfather’s Irish fairies” for her storytelling gift.

For more information, please contact Cheryl Wilson, Special Collections Librarian, at 646-3238.