
Francis La Flesche was an important Native American scholar in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. La Flesche was a member of a prominent Omaha family who moved to Washington DC in 1881 to work with the Indian Service. There he met and began working with Alice Fletcher, an anthropologist who was conducting research about Dhegian Siouan people. Working with Fletcher and James Dorsey, another anthropologist, La Flesche became a skilled ethnologist and linguist. He worked with Fletcher for twenty years to produce the classic study of his people, The Omaha Tribe. Upon completing the Omaha project La Flesche moved on to examine and record the culture of another Dhegian Siouan group, the Osage.

In the 1890s La Flesche had entertained Osage delegations visiting Washington DC, and in 1910 he traveled to Pawhuska to conduct fieldwork among the Osage. La Flesche wanted to change course with his Osage project. His early work with Fletcher about the Omaha had been broad based and largely descriptive. With the Osage he wanted to focus on the Osage religion, moving beyond mere description to incorporate explanations of materials he collected. As an Omaha La Flesche already knew much about the Osage religion for it...

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