

180 *South Dakota History*



*Amanda E. ("Mandy") Clement*

## Dakota Images

Amanda E. ("Mandy") Clement, baseball's first paid female umpire, began her six-year career in 1904 at the age of sixteen.

Born 20 March 1888 in Hudson, South Dakota, Clement lived close to Hudson Park, where baseball was the local pastime. Relegated to the position of umpire because of her gender, Clement took her place behind the pitcher, calling balls and strikes and plays at all four bases. Umpiring as many as sixty games a season in the Dakotas, Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska, she earned fifteen to twenty-five dollars per game. Her earnings paid for her education at Yankton College and the University of Nebraska, where she received her degree in physical education in 1909. Myths surrounding Clement's college athletic career suggest that she was a tennis and track champion who set unofficial world records in shotput, sprints, and hurdles. Clement is officially credited with the world record for a woman throwing a baseball—279 feet, which she did at the age of twenty-four.

Widely respected for her abilities, Clement became known as the "Lady in Blue," and every baseball team in the five-state area sought to hire her. A Congregationalist, Clement requested lodging with local ministers when she officiated at out-of-town games. She refused to umpire on Sundays, and she once left the field when profanity was used.

After graduation in 1909, Clement's interests shifted. She taught physical education in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wyoming, coached baseball, organized men's and women's college teams, and managed YMCAs in the Midwest. She returned to Hudson in 1929 to care for her mother, and while there, she held various jobs, including justice of the peace, city assessor, police matron, drug-store clerk, and typesetter for the local newspaper. After her mother's death in 1934, Clement moved to Sioux Falls, where she spent twenty-five years as a social worker, retiring in 1966.

While Amanda E. Clement never umpired a professional baseball game, her influence as the first woman umpire provided inspiration for others. She has been featured in *Sports Illustrated* and inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, the Women's Sports Hall of Fame and Women's Sports Foundation in San Francisco, California, and the South Dakota Sports Hall of Fame in Sioux Falls. Clement died in July 1971.

Copyright of South Dakota History is the property of South Dakota State Historical Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.

All illustrations in this issue are property of the South Dakota State Historical Society except for those on the following pages: pp. 94, 102, 105, 107, from Ole H. V. Stalheim, Ames, Iowa; p. 97, from John Cary, West Liberty, Iowa, and the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association; pp. 101, 112, from S. W. Allen, Jr., Watertown, S.Dak.; p. 115, from National Animal Disease Center Archives, Ames, Iowa; pp. 148, 151, 156, 167, from Richard L. Waltz, Sioux Falls, S.Dak.; p. 180, from E. F. ("Clem") Clement, Boca Raton, Fla.