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NGUBANE Harriet (known to many as Harriet Sibisi)

1. Harriet Ngubane was born in 1926 at Inchanga, and educated at Mariannhill Mission. She taught there until she decided to study Social Anthropology at Natal University. She graduated in 1958. Harriet had had a Christian upbringing and had to rediscover the beliefs of her people and their attitude to misfortune and death. She was helped in this by ~~the~~ her experience as interpreter to Professor Eileen Krige, who was doing research among the Zulus of the Valley of a Thousand Hills.

Cartoon: Harriet interpreting for Eileen Krige in the Valley

2. Harriet proceeded to her honours degree in Anthropology, the first African woman to do so. Then she returned to Mariannhill to teach. But she found time to pursue her research and to look after her husband and seven children. She learned much from observing the people in the Valley seeking advice from the isangoma, the diviner.

Cartoon Harriet watching the isangoma at work

3. In 1970 she had the fortune to be invited as doctoral student to Cambridge University. Her thesis was "A Study of Health and Disease in Nyuswa". She returned briefly in 1973, but in 1974 lectured at Selly Oak, Birmingham on Zulu religion. This was followed by study at Oxford, Edinburgh, and London. She is one of the most learned of South African women.

Cartoon: Sorry I cannot think of anything except Harriet lecturing at Edinburgh. Her students would be of mature age and they would be some blacks amongst them.