



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

The journey all began on January 1st 2015 when our flight to Atlanta left. I had been waiting for this day for months and finally the moment arrived. After a very stressful period of trying to pack for five months in one suitcase, we were sitting on the plane. Seventeen and half hours later we finally arrived. Once we got through all the customs we caught our connecting flight to Minneapolis and then to Sioux Falls.



Exchange Experience



The first week was definitely a shock to the system as we experienced temperatures of about -40°C . This was met with many snow storms and a blizzard, something I hadn't seen very much of before this experience. As the weeks went by, we started to adjust to the weather and life at South Dakota State University (SDSU). SDSU is located in the town of Brookings, that has approximately a population of 22,056. This is a lot smaller than Johannesburg. I really enjoyed the freedom of being in a smaller town, walking everywhere without worrying about security was very refreshing. Becoming immersed in a different culture was very exciting. We became good friends with the girls who stayed in our apartment building. They helped us a lot and made sure to include us in everything. This really made our experience more memorable as we got to travel around with them. The first destination we traveled to was the Black Hills in South Dakota. This is home to Mount Rushmore. The second destination was Iowa, and the third was New York. Having the opportunity to visit these places definitely had to be the highlight of my experience.





Over Easter break we traveled to the Black Hills, this really made my realize just how big America is as we drove for six hours and didn't even leave the State of South Dakota. Here we were able to experience the culture of the Midwest as the town is decorated in a very old fashioned west manner. Whilst we were here we stopped at a photography shop that shoots people in a typical western background. This photograph I will treasure forever. We were also fortunate enough to see Mount Rushmore.



Our next stop was due to our roommate Rachel who took us back to her farm in Iowa for a weekend. This was such a fun experience, the first night there we stayed in her boyfriends town called Germantown. This is the smallest town I have even been in with a population of thirty two people. The next day we went to her town named Cherokee, here her father taught me to shoot a gun for the first time ever. Soon our experience came to an end, and it was time to come home. We experienced such mixed emotions as we had to say goodbye to our friends we had made, whilst being so excited to see our families. We stopped at New York for ten days and this felt like we were in the movies, completely indescribable. On May the nineteenth we landed back in South Africa. This was definitely the experience of a lifetime. One I will always be grateful for.

