



THE PAUTES

AT A GLANCE: SOUTHERN PAIUTE WOMEN AS LEADERS

The Paiute people have a strong tradition of female leadership, personified most famously by Sarah Winnemucca. In the second half of nineteenth century, at a time when politics was generally dominated by men, Sarah Winnemucca served as a political and cultural leader of the Northern Paiutes. The daughter of Chief Winnemucca, a leader of Paiutes who lived around Pyramid Lake, Nevada, Winnemucca worked for peace between the Northern Paiutes and American settlers.

Although the Northern and Southern Paiute are distinct tribes, contemporary Southern Paiute leaders have taken inspiration from Sarah Winnemucca's example. Winnemucca paved the way for Indian women leaders, and *We Shall Remain: The Paiute* offers several examples of Southern Paiute women with important leadership roles. Today, Paiute women are working in the official political life of the tribe and seeking to preserve and teach important Paiute cultural practices.

Lora Tom, current vice-chairwoman of the Paiute Tribe of Utah, serves as an example of female political leadership and cites Winnemucca as one of her influences. Tom attended the Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah, where she served as vice president of her senior class, developing leadership skills that she would use later in life. Following in the footsteps of previous tribal chairwomen, such as her aunt Geneal Anderson, Tom understands the importance of young people learning about their culture and history so that they will be able to carry on the traditions of the tribe. She has worked especially hard to keep the Paiute language alive, as she explains in her interview for *We Shall Remain*: "Language is certainly one focus in which the tribal council has looked at over several years. We've looked at, as far as traditions are concerned, the way that young men, young women are brought up in the tribe learning the different stories, learning the different types of ways that you endure in life . . . and [interruption] what was told from your elders." Language and tradition

will remain a focus for the tribe under the leadership of the new tribal chairwoman, Jeanine Borchart.

Other Paiute women in the film do not necessarily exercise political power in the same way that Tom does, but they are cultural leaders who work for the preservation of Paiute traditions and practices. Eleanor Tom and Karman Grayman, for example, have worked to preserve Paiute dignity by contradicting long-held beliefs about the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Shannon Martineau seeks to inspire children to become active in Paiute culture. For Martineau, traditional songs and dances are especially important, and in her interview for *We Shall Remain*, she argues that practicing songs and dances again would help strengthen the Paiute people:

My sister and I have soooo many ideas on how to bring back the bear dance circle dance and all these . . . quail dance. I want to make mountain sheep horn dress for my son so he can do that for shows and there's quail dancing and coyote dancing and there's just all a big variety and my dad preserved all that he knew about the dances so we have pretty much enough information to bring it back, and I have old recordings that he'd done back in the '60s of all these old people that have passed away now that had sung songs, quail dance songs and mountain sheep horn songs that I have on recordings, so we can relearn it and bring it back.

Similarly, Eleanor Tom recognizes the importance of relating traditional stories to younger generations because she herself finds strength from her knowledge of Paiute culture. She explains, "Well, I'm going to say that I am proud being a Paiute woman because I was taught the traditional ways."

The Southern Paiute leaders who are working to make a difference in tribal life are following in the footsteps of Sarah Winnemucca. The study of the ingenuity of Paiute women leaders through time elucidates how tribal culture is maintained and strengthened.