

# Female Leaders Throughout Paiute History

## Summary

The student will understand the life of Sarah Winnemucca and be able to draw connections between Winnemucca's beliefs and accomplishments and the beliefs and impact of contemporary Southern Paiute women leaders.

## Time Frame

3 class periods of 30 minutes each

## Materials

### Teacher Materials

- [At a Glance: Southern Paiute Women as Leaders](#) (pdf)
- Video: [We Shall Remain: The Paiute](#)

### Student Materials

- [Sarah Winnemucca, American Indian Leader](#) (pdf)

## Background for Teachers

This lesson examines the experiences of women leaders in Paiute culture. The activity begins with Sarah Winnemucca, the daughter of a chief who lived in the second half of the nineteenth century. She became a leader and fought for Native American rights through peaceful negotiations with the United States. She was also the first American Indian woman to write and secure copyright to an autobiography, *Life Among the Piute: Their Wrongs and Claims*. At a time when neither women nor Native Americans were regarded as political equals with white men, Sarah Winnemucca stood her ground, becoming a forerunner of later leaders who fought for the rights of women and American Indians.

The lesson draws connections to present-day women leaders of the Paiute Tribe of Utah, such as former chairwomen Lora Tom and Geneal Anderson, current chair woman Jeanine Borchart, and cultural leaders Eleanor Toms, Karman Grayman, and Shanana Martineau.

## Instructional Procedures

Have students brainstorm a list of women in politics or positions of power in society. Discuss their answers as a class. Ask the students if they would have had an easier time identifying men in politics or positions of power in society. Discuss the reasons that they think this is the case. Ask whether students believe a person's gender influences the type of leader they are. If so, is this true for women and men? Ask the students if they think their list of women leaders would have been easier or more difficult to fill in if they were talking about the "Old West." Ask students to volunteer any examples of women leaders from the "Old West." Review any answers you get, or discuss why there are not a lot of examples of nineteenth-century female leaders that they have learned about.

Pass out the "Sarah Winnemucca, American Indian Leader" student sheets. Have students make two lists as they read, one listing the challenges that Sarah Winnemucca had to overcome and one detailing the things she was able to accomplish. (This can be classwork or a homework assignment.) Show the students *We Shall Remain: The Paiute* (you may choose to have the students watch the full documentary or just the clips above). As they watch the film or clips, have the students take notes on leadership. What types of leaders are portrayed in the film? Cultural? Political? Are there women in these leadership roles? Who are they and how do they lead? What issues do they focus on? What role does their gender play in their leadership?

Using their Sarah Winnemucca lists and their film notes, have the students write an essay or make a

chart or Venn diagram comparing the modern examples of Paiute leadership with the example set by Sarah Winnemucca.

### Extensions

Have students write a take-home essay about one of the leaders in the film. Some possible essay questions include: "What does Lora Tom see as the Paiutes' recent successes and what does she see as some of the difficulties in Paiute tribal life?" or "How does Shanan Martineau view the importance of raising children with Paiute cultural knowledge? How does she believe they benefit from being Paiutes?"

Students can explore the Utah American Indian Digital Archive at [www.UtahIndians.org](http://www.UtahIndians.org) for further information about the Southern Paiutes.

### Assessment Plan

Sarah Winnemucca lists

Film notes on leadership

Comparative project of your choice

### [End of Unit Assessment](#)

### Bibliography

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Tom, Gary, and Ronald Holt. "The Paiute Tribe of Utah." In *A History of Utah's American Indians*. Ed. Forrest Cuch. Salt Lake City: Utah Division of Indian Affairs and Utah State Division of History, 2000.

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Tom, Lora. Interview with Forrest Cuch. Mar. 6, 2008. *We Shall Remain*, KUED Public Television.

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Zanjani, Sally. *Sarah Winnemucca*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.

The University of Utah's [American West Center](#) (AWC) produced the curriculum materials in consultation with the [Utah Division of Indian Affairs](#), [Utah State Office of Education](#), [KUED 7](#), and the Goshute, Northwestern Band of the Shoshone, Southern Paiute, and Ute nations.

### Authors

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