



Sarah Winnemucca

Given by Nevada to the National Statuary Hall Collection

SARAH WINNEMUCCA (1844–1891) was a member of the Paiute tribe born in what would later become the state of Nevada. She was the daughter of the Chief Winnemucca and granddaughter of Chief Truckee. Her Paiute name was Thocmetony (or Tocmetoni), which means “shellflower”; it is not known why or when she took the name Sarah. Having a great facility with languages, she served as an interpreter and negotiator between her people and the U.S. Army. In 1878 when the Bannock Indians revolted and were being pursued by the U.S. Army under General Oliver Howard’s command, Sarah volunteered for a dangerous mission. Locating her father’s band being forcibly held by the Bannocks, she secretly led them away to army protection in a three-day ride over 230 miles of rugged terrain with little food or rest.

As a spokesperson for her people, she gave over 300 speeches to win support for them, and she met with President Rutherford B. Hayes and Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz in 1880. Her 1883 autobiography, *Life among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*, was the first book written by a Native American woman. She started a school for Native Americans, where she taught children both in their native language and in English. She was married at least twice, first to Lieutenant Edward C. Bartlett and later to Lewis H. Hopkins. Sarah Winnemucca died in 1891.

The bronze statue depicts Sarah Winnemucca as she looked around the age of 35, with hair falling to her waist. She wears a dress adorned with fringe that swirls as if windswept; this and her stance impart a sense of movement. With her left arm she holds a book at her side, and in her right hand she holds a shellflower aloft. A plaque affixed to the pedestal reads



Bronze by Benjamin Victor

Given in 2005; located in CVC Emancipation Hall.

Sarah Winnemucca
[facsimile of her signature, “Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins”]
1844–1891
Nevada
Defender of human rights
Educator
Author of first book by a Native woman

April 2011

Sarah Winnemucca facts: Sarah Winnemucca (1844?-1891) was active as a peacemaker, teacher, and defender of the rights of Native Americans. She published *Life among the Paiutes, Their Wrongs and Claims* and founded a school for Indians. Sarah Winnemucca...
Sarah Winnemucca Facts. Sarah Winnemucca (1844?-1891) was active as a peacemaker, teacher, and defender of the rights of Native Americans. She published *Life among the Paiutes, Their Wrongs and Claims* and founded a school for Indians. (Born Thocmetony; also known as Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins) American political activist and autobiographer. Winnemucca whose name in her native Northern Paiute language was Thocmetony, meaning "shell flower" was born in approximately 1844 on Paiute land near Humboldt Lake in what is now Nevada. Her grandfather, Truckee, was a Paiute chieftain, although not chief of the entire Paiute tribe as Winnemucca would later claim.