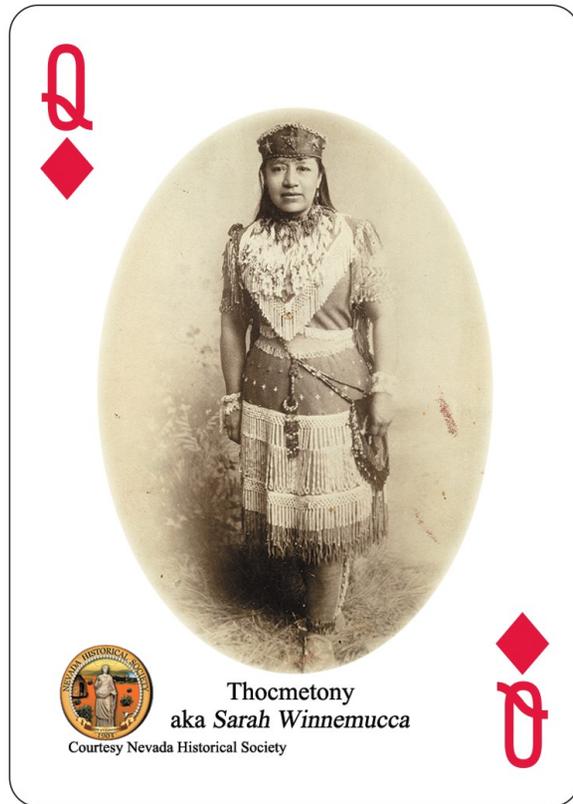


Tsome-Tonega (Thocmetony), aka Sarah Winnemucca 1844-1891



Sarah Winnemucca's birth name is commonly spelled Thocmetony, but Pyramid Lake Paiute elder Ralph Burns has stated that this spelling reflects an anglicized version of her birth name. In her native Northern Paiute language, the accurate spelling of her name is Tsome-Tonega, meaning "shell flower". Her statue at the U.S. Capitol was recently dedicated with this spelling, rather than the Thocmetony of popular use.

Sarah Winnemucca was born at a critical time for the indigenous peoples of what is now northern Nevada. This daughter of Chief Winnemucca and granddaughter of Chief Truckee was born prior to the first contact of Northern Paiute peoples with non-natives. By the time she died in 1891, their lives, and the lives of all of Nevada's native populations, had changed forever.

Having a great facility with languages, Sarah served as an interpreter and negotiator between her people and the U.S. Army. In 1878 when the Bannock Indians revolted, she 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, Sarah Winnemucca gave over 300 speeches to win support for them, and she met with President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880. This photo was taken in that same year. Her 1883 autobiography, *Life among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*, was the first book written by a Native American woman in English.

For more information on Sarah Winnemucca and other important Nevada women visit:

<http://www.unr.edu/nwhp/biographies.htm>

