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

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 (1844-1891) was born Thocmentony, a Paiute name that means "Shell Flower." She was a peacemaker, teacher, interpreter, scout, and defender of the rights of Native Americans. She was notable for being the first Native American woman to secure a copyright and to publish in the English language. She was also known by her married name, Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, under which she published her book, *Life Among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*. Sarah Winnemucca, also called Sarah Hopkins Winnemucca or Sally Winnemucca, original name Thoc-me-tony, Thocmectony, or Tocmectone (Shell Flower), born A granddaughter of Truckee and daughter of Winnemucca, both Northern Paiute chiefs, she lived during part of her childhood in the San Joaquin valley of California, where she learned both Spanish and English. After her return to Nevada she lived for a time with a white family and adopted the name Sarah.