



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



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Tribal Leaders

Native American women have left an important legacy of being strong leaders. When writing our book, we strived to find evidence of the early Native American women, to tell their stories. Sadly, many of their names have been lost to history; much of early Native American culture was an oral tradition. In this edition of our newsletter, we are proud to profile Nancy Ward, Sarah Winnemucca, Annie Dodge Wauneka, and Wilma Mankiller. These leaders literally fought in battle, fought for the rights of their people, and worked to make lives better for all.

Cherokee leader Nancy Ward gained renown when she took her husband's place in the battle of Taliwa (fought in 1775 in what is present-day Georgia) between the Cherokees and the Creeks. Her efforts helped the Cherokees win decisively. For her courage, she was named Agi-ga-u-e (Beloved Woman). Ward headed the influential Woman's Council and was a member of the Council of Chiefs. Later, she learned to make butter and cheese and had the first dairy cattle among the Cherokees.

Sarah Winnemucca was a Native American leader who dedicated her life to returning land back to the tribes that had been taken by the U.S. government, especially the land of her own Paiute tribe. Being gifted with languages (she spoke Spanish and English in addition to three Native American dialects), Winnemucca was often asked to help by interpreting. Winnemucca visited Washington, DC and met with President Rutherford B. Hayes to gain the return of Native American lands. Her 1883 book, *Life Among the Piutes*, brought attention to the wrongs inflicted on her people. After her death, she was called "Mother" by her people. She has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



Wilma Mankiller



Annie Dodge
Wauneka

Annie Dodge Wauneka came to be called "Beloved Mother" among the Navajo. She was the first woman elected to the Navajo tribal council, in 1953. Wauneka used her knowledge of English and Navajo to bring modern medical practices to the reservation. She helped eradicate tuberculosis and significantly reduce infant mortality. She became the first Native American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Additional recognition came when she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

In 1985, Wilma Mankiller became the first woman to serve as the head of a major Native American tribe in North America. She reinstated the role of women as tribal leaders. After helping her Oklahoma tribe of over 70,000 members gain both economic independence and a sense of cultural pride, she was named Ms. Magazine's 'Woman of the Year'. Mankiller has also been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. She said, "A lot of young girls have looked to their career paths and have said they'd like to be chief. There's been a change in the limits people see."

We are honored to tell you about the accomplishments of these amazing women leaders on whose shoulders we all stand. We'd love to hear from you, if you know other early Native American women whose stories we can share.

Check out our newly enhanced web site for past editions of our enewsletter, articles and columns written about Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America and historical women, book club discussion guidelines, educational resources, and more!

Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America
www.herstoryatimeline.com

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