

>> Imagine being in a room full of men, having only a few minutes to convey the suffering and injustice endured by your people. Advocating for their rights in a continual battle for survival. Now imagine not only being a different gender, but coming from a separate culture.

[Music]

>> You're listening to Shaping History, Women in Capitol Art, produced by the Capitol Visitors Center. Our mission is to inform, involve, and inspire every visitor to the United States Capitol. I'm your host, Janet Clemens.

[Music]

A statue honoring Sarah Winnemucca was given by the State of Nevada, to the National Statuary Hall Collection in 2005. Born around 1844, Sarah Winnemucca was a Northern Paiute woman, who took her seat before an Indian Affairs Subcommittee in 1884, testifying about the hardships her people experienced and petitioned the government to allow them to relocate to a more habitable environment. Her life of diplomacy was controversial, she navigated the nuances of straddling two different worlds. She harnessed [inaudible] in her own command of the English language to further promote her message, becoming the first Native American woman to publish a book in the United States, called *Life Among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*. I spoke with Farar Elliot, curator of the U.S. House of Representatives, about the congressional testimony of Sarah Winnemucca, with additional commentary provided by Cari Carpenter, Professor of English at West Virginia University, co-editor of the book, *Newspaper Warrior*. Here's Farar Elliot.

>> It's really interesting because Sarah Winnemucca also was this real visionary who understood that her actions were taken within an oppressive environment so she was using all the tools she had. So she came to the Capitol, it wasn't her first time at the Capitol, but certainly her first time testifying, in 1884. And she came to that with several years' worth of lecturing experience. She did a lot of public lectures and when she did, she knew that it was really a performance. This was not going to be, you know, a down and dirty one on one negotiation, this was theatrical. So she would wear native dress and she would speak to pull hearers heart strings. So when she testified, she did the same thing; she speak very much with an emotionally charged sense of things and she did an amazing job in crafting this sort of persuasive argument that she tailored to her audience. And because it wasn't her first time, she certainly had already had the experience of disappointment in coming to Washington but she used it really well. It was really interesting, in Washington, when Native American groups would come here, they were often written about in the newspapers, they often stayed at the Tremont Hotel, which was right near the Capitol. And when they came there, they were in some ways incarcerated there. They were very much sort of infantilized, they didn't want Sarah Winnemucca for example, to talk to the press. So they, she had like a handler, she and her group, had a handler and they had her busy every moment of the day, and were trying to keep her from talking about the issues. And that happened with lots of different people who visited, who were Native Americans. But she was really so brilliant, she understanding the game that was being played, she used flattery, she told the newspapers, I've been to many cities but Washington's the most beautiful, it's

more beautiful than this one and that one, and so she would take these little wedges that she could shove into a seemingly easy going conversation with a reporter and then start talking about what was important to her, about what she needed for her nation. She also wrote about in her book, she says, you know, I came to Washington, I went to the White House, I met the president, but she just sums up their conversation as two sentences basically and he walks out of the room. And she circled that back around and put I right there in her book. She's very forthright and manages somehow to do it in a way where she maintains some level of, I don't know, respectability, legitimacy, with the people she's trying to speak to and I think that's probably because she's terribly charismatic, incredibly well-spoken to whatever audience she's speaking to. She was a very savvy person in her ability to kind of alter what she was doing to suit the needs was incredible.

>> Here is Cari Carpenter.

>> She was particularly good at sentimentality about the fourth removal from [inaudible], she says, and I'll just read this quote; women would be coming along crying and it was not because they were cold, for they were used to the cold. It was not because they were sick, for they suffered a great deal. The women were crying because they were carrying their frozen children in their arms and of course the soldiers never could stop and they would dig into the snow as deep as over your head and try to dig a grave and even if they wanted to dig a grave, they could not. And the only thing the mother could do was to stop off on to one side and dig a little hole and stick her little frozen child under the snow.

[Music]

>> While Sarah Winnemucca's testimony was a significant historical moment, there was so much more to her life than this one event. To hear more about her impact and influence, I spoke with a very special guest. I'm speaking to Sherry Ely-Mendes, who is the Vice Chairwoman of the Pyramid Lake, Paiute tribe. Sherry, welcome to the podcast.

>> Good morning, thank you for having me.

>> Great, so the first thing that I want to ask you is what your connection is to Sarah Winnemucca?

>> I'm a tribal member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe, and Sarah Winnemucca was my great-great grandmother, and I know in the American way, she probably would be considered my great aunt, but in the Indian way, she would be considered by grandmother so she was my great-great grandmother and I'm very proud of that.

>> Yeah, that's so exciting to have someone in your family tree who's also in the history books. And then she wrote books herself and she was reported on in newspapers, coast to coast.

>> Yeah, she was a pretty amazing Native American woman. Kind of a little out of her time and I thought it was pretty amazing.

>> Yeah, so let's maybe start there; can you just summarize for us like, who is Sarah Winnemucca?

>> Well Sarah Winnemucca was a Native American woman advocate, which was unusual in her time. She was the daughter of the old Chief Winnemucca and she was a sister to my great-great uncle, Natchez Overton and all the way on down to [inaudible] Overton and actually she was definitely a friend to her community, she was a visionary, she was very insightful, and a very determined young woman who spoke well and communicated well in her ability to navigate through the changing times was pretty amazing for a young woman in that time.

>> You mentioned the community that she comes from, can you tell us a little bit about her community?

>> Well, you know, she was all over the place in Northern Nevada, she did quite a bit of advocacy here at the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in a time when the encroachment was happening and there was a lot of navigating through, you know, what was happening to Native American people being put on reservations, being kind of required to live completely different life, pretty much enclosed, taken away from their food sources, and just really kind of in a humongous culture shock era. So, she originated from Pyramid Lake and she moved about Northern Nevada as an interpreter and as an advocate for Native American rights. And for the people in the different reservations that we all were kind of part of, because we did a lot of traveling from here and there to gather food and to go to gatherings and to commune at religious ceremonies, [inaudible] she was in McDermitt and [inaudible] and Lovelock and just a wide range of different communities. I felt like she was part of the native community over all of Northern Nevada, but she lived here at Pyramid Lake and this is where her family grew up and where they lived.

>> Speaking of family, what kinds of stories were passed down from family members about Sarah?

>> Well you know, it was an interesting time because I didn't really hear too much about Sarah Winnemucca until I was older, in my teens, and it was kind of a quieted subject in our family simply because my grandmother, Josephine Natchez, grew up in a boarding school here in Carson City at Stewart Indian School. She was taken to Stewart Indian School when she was 5 years old and she didn't leave there until she was 18. So, she was taught to kind of be closed lips about those kind of discussions about how Native American peoples were treated and of course, she was mandated not to speak her language and not to practice her culture. And so, she did that quietly with my mom, she told my mom stories of what she knew of Sarah and how she was out there advocating but there was not those personal one on one conversations a lot with her, she was very closed lips on that kind of stuff. I heard a lot in the community later on, mixed messages about you know, what Sarah's impact was on the community regarding our human rights and regarding some of the tragedies that happened along the way with the Pyramid Lake wars and all of the controversy that was happening and some of the atrocities. Most of all we just heard that she was our family member. That she was our great-great grandmother and that she was a powerful woman, and that she was forthright and that she spoke up for her people.

>> Well, it's interesting that you mentioned your grandmother going to that boarding school for her childhood and not being able to speak her language because one of the things

that Sarah did toward the end of her life, right, was to found a school that was teaching in English and in, is it nu-moo [phonetic]?

>> Yes, Numu.

>> And that was unusual for the time, right?

>> Yeah, it was very unusual for the time, I mean you know, that was one of her most, I think, important contributions to the tribe, other than you know, keeping us alive, was that she was insightful and she knew and she could see the world changing around her and she knew that if we didn't get in the mix and start to learn the language and bring ourselves along with that, we were going to perish and so being part of that and blending our worlds was really a huge accomplishment in her time.

>> Yeah, I want to ask you, how did it feel, what can you tell us about when Sarah was selected to be a statue to represent the State of Nevada, the Capitol, how did it feel to hear that she was chosen?

>> It was awesome, I mean that was exactly where she belonged. That is exactly where she belongs and I think it was a little humbling and we were very excited about it. I know my mom went down to Carson City, my mom, Dorothy Ely, and helped the sculptor to create the stature to ensure that the way it looked was the way she would want it to be. And so she went down several times, tirelessly. It was fun to watch her be part of that process. Because of course, she's an educator here at Pyramid Lake, she's been head of the Johnson-O'Malley Program which does educational activities with the kids throughout the school year and in the summer time and she's been doing that for over 30 years.

>> Wow.

>> She's 84 years old and she's still doing it. Yeah!

>> So you mention your mother visiting with the artist and wanting it to be an accurate reflection of her. Can you describe for us, some of those details that we might be able to see?

>> I think he did a fabulous job to begin with and she was glad that, you know, the book was part of the sculpture and that the flower was part of the sculpture because I don't remember how to say her name in Paiute, but her name was not Sarah Winnemucca. And it translated to shell flower so she was Shell Flower, and the shell flower in her hand is what she was named after. So those things, she was really glad that he included some of the more detailed things like the dress and you know, how it flows, and her feet. She wanted to make sure it was perfectly her, using the image that he did to create that, so yeah. And she just loved it, the whole way and I can tell you when we went to DC, she had not traveled on an airplane for years, and years, and years, she just does not travel on an airplane, and she wanted to go so we had [inaudible] we got to get in a plane, we can't drive there. So we got her there and at the reception and at the big unveiling in the rotunda, it was beautiful but when it was time to leave, my mom wouldn't leave. She didn't want to leave her there, she said, we can't just leave her here. And I said Mom, that was the idea, we're leaving her here,

yeah, she's got to stay. But it was really interesting that she was like, she needs to come home.

>> Yeah, but if you think about the number of people who visit the Capitol, having Sarah here for people to see her is enabling her to travel much more than she ever could have in her lifetime, right? I mean she traveled widely but all the folks that come, we get students from all over the nation and we get people from all over the world and they all see her there. So she's, Sarah's traveling without having to get on a plane.

>> Absolutely, she's still traveling. We have a huge belief though in our world, in our culture, that the journey is not over, just another one begins. So I think it's a beautiful thing that she's there, I hope that people stop to learn more about her because I think there's a lot of statues and people depicted in those statues that we need to know about. They're part of where we came from and how we became who we are, and whether or not they lived in times that were controversial or what they did amongst their own people being controversial, because that was also something that was really hard and even to this day, when they were going to put the statue where it was, there were a few tribal members that were against it, that felt as if Sarah having tried to advocate and negotiate her way through things, you know, negotiation doesn't always work for the better of your own people, and so there was controversy, there were folks that felt as if she were a traitor and that comes with the territory when you're out there advocating and when you're trying to make big [inaudible] for your people. Sometimes the other side wins.

>> Yeah, and you mentioned the times actually that Sarah Winnemucca came to Washington, came to Congress to testify on behalf of her people, and to advocate for them, you know, right here in Washington, I don't know if it's something that you've had a chance to think about but, what do you think that might have felt like for her to stand there in front of the House Subcommittee on Indian Affairs in 1884?

>> I think it was probably pretty nerve wracking, I think it was probably pretty hard for her to muster the courage to do that but from what I know and hear of her, she was a pretty strong person and she was very determined. So that determination gave her the strength to be able to do that, and when you read her book and you kind of learn the history of that white settlers coming in, it was horrifying, so when she's seen that and knowing what position she was in to make a difference in that, I would imagine that gave her a lot of courage.

>> Yeah, I found a quote in her book, she said; I've suffered everything but death to come here with this paper.

>> And that piece of paper meant a lot to them.

>> Yeah.

>> It meant a lot. And it meant a lot to everybody because there wasn't the kind of clear communication we have today, when you can sit in front of your TV and know what's happening in Washington. You don't know, it wasn't a known and those types of documents were important to people. They were solid as a rock and they were used throughout

Northern Nevada, that piece of paper really spoke volumes to the elders and to leaders, so it meant something and she knew that and she knew that being able to communicate in that manner was going to be her stronghold.

[Music]

>> While much is known about Sarah Winnemucca's life through her own words and various accounts of her public lectures and performances, not everyone's stories are so effectively documented. The stories of both Sakakawea and Sarah Winnemucca are widely known, but the ways in which those stories are told are vastly different. As Sakakawea's journey is known only through the writings of Lewis and Clark. These differences can be seen in their artistic portrayals and to further discuss these [inaudible] interpretations, I invited a guest from the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

>> So I'm in Emancipation Hall, the heart of the Capitol Visitors Center, it's a huge soaring space, it's filled with sculpture, there are about 14 here from the National Statuary Hall Collection, and the Statuary Hall Collection represents two statues sent to us by each of the 50 states. They're all over the building and as guides and interpreters here, we're often asked to know a little bit about each one. But I want to take with you guys, kind of a deeper look into two in particular, have this unique opportunity that these two statues are very class to each other in this room. Although they represent different states and they're made by different artists, we're going to discuss them in conversation with each other. We have the statue of Sakakawea from North Dakota, and we have a statue of Sarah Winnemucca from Nevada. So I've asked my two neighbors from the National Museum of the American Indian, just down the hill from us here at the Capitol, to join me for this discussion. So ladies, welcome.

>> Hi. I'm Sharyl Pahe-Short. I'm the Visitor Services Manager from the National Museum of the American Indian, and I'm originally from Arizona and I'm Navajo and San Carlos Apache.

>> Hello, everyone, thanks for having us. My name is Adrienne Smith and I work at the National Museum of the American Indian also, I am the imagiNATIONS Activity Center Coordinator. I am Cherokee and Muscogee Creek, from Oklahoma.

>> So we're all kind of in the business of working with the public and interpreting collections for the public, so I feel that that's something we have in common, that we're used to looking at objects or art works the way that a visitor might approach them. But when we are looking at pieces of art in particular, we come with our own perspectives as well.

>> Yeah, I know for ourselves at the National Museum of the American Indian, we have the really unique opportunity of giving different types of perspectives, whether we come from a native perspective or whether we come from a non-native perspective, we really value both of those. And I know for myself and because we're highlighting a native woman sculpture, a lot of this really resonates with myself being a native woman, and for a woman to be prominent on a sculpture like this, it really shows the roles that women play especially not only in say in this case with North Dakota, but also in our societies. For my

community back home in Arizona, whether that's Navajo or San Carlos, is that we are matrilineal societies first and foremost. And another way of how we usually introduce ourselves, just how we did earlier is that if we were amongst other native people, especially of our relationship, that we would also mention our clan, we have a clanship system. And basically, a clanship system is just one way of looking at kind of a further family kind of heritage. It's kind of a way of looking at even further, where you're from. So you could say you're from a tribe, but if you say what your clan is, it really pinpoints you to whether it be a geographic area or just an area. So, for matrilineal societies, there's two types for native people; there's patrilineal and matrilineal. Matrilineal is your mother's side, patrilineal is your father's side. For many tribes, not all, it's matrilineal, but there's also just, I want to make note, because we say this a lot at NMAI too is, not all tribes have a clanship system so we don't want that assumption either. But for myself being a matrilineal society, is that women have these really prominent roles. That's also how we pass on our heritage from one generation to the next. So, for example, I have a son and so his clan is my clan, because I'm his matrilineal society. So for her, when I look at this sculpture, I want people to think about interpreting it, is even think further about her relationship because we know that Sakakawea did have a son, right, a child, and so what did that relationship mean and why do you think the artist would put that in the sculpture here? I would even add that element to it. What does that mean for her people to represent another family member?

>> Yeah, we're going to put up photographs so that the listeners can see the image, but just sort of to flesh it out for them if they're listening, just describe it a little bit perhaps.

>> So in looking at this sculpture of Sakakawea, it's roughly about 8 feet and she's made of bronze, she is holding an infant on her back with either like some sort of a sash, blanket, cradle board type item, and she looks like she's kind of in a reverent sort of staring off into the sky in a way or the world. And she has on some regalia, you can tell because there's fringe at the bottom. You can see the moccasins that she's wearing on her feet, you know, both of those can describe what community or what tribe she might come from. And so looking at the sculpture also, the one thing that I notice is her name and with her name, even the spelling, is not the way that I learned. There's two K's, when I learned spelling it was S-a-k-a-g-a-w-e-a, and that was something that was different in looking at how now the spelling of her name is different from what history had it, and I know from the fact that Lewis and Clark had very many spellings of her name because they weren't sure, they spelled everything phonetically, as the Hidatsa and the Shoshone didn't have written languages.

>> Yeah, what I would say about this piece, kind of giving more depth to what she's actually wearing is to kind of understand her community and where she's from. In her community, which is basically the area of what we call the Great Basin, the Plateau Region, not quite the plains, but we actually have a way to determine, based on her dress, what it's made. And this is what we would see as a Two Hide Dress, and what we mean by a Two Hide Dress is that if you look at what's underneath this blanket or cape, is that it is clearly made of buckskin because there's fringes to it and usually fringes are what's torn and shaped in that very specific way, is that most Two Hide Dresses in this area, and what I mean by two hide is that there's an animal skin that you would have in the front and then you would have an animal skin in the back and then they're connected on the sides. And because it's either

deer, elk, sometimes it's even goat, mountain goat, because they're up in the Plateau Region, is that I just actually have an example here I'm going to pass to you, is that there are many ways in which the hide is used to preserve and people should know that there is a brain tanned hide and there is also what is called a smoked tanned hide. And most likely, tribes from this area, they used both, meaning that they always tried to use every part of the material, so what they would do in a brain tanned hide is that you would get the brain from that animal and you would rub it all over the hide, and same with the smoke, you would literally put this over like a fire and get the smoke from it and kind of drape it over. But the point of why I'm mentioning this is that it helps as a form of protection. People always ask us, when they look at pieces, especially of women's dress is that they wonder how they lasted so long. How did they keep the wear and tear away from this. So that was one traditional way of doing so. Another thing of looking at the dress is that it's all adorned. We see that they've clearly used fringes, and then we also see in the front of the sculpture, we see what looks like a knife sheath, yeah, where it held, most likely, a knife. And what's dangling from it, which to my perspective it looks like something that possibly could be made out of metal. But before I go into that metal material, I just wanted to say that natural materials, that is probably the number one question that people may look at these two pieces, is what did native people use for the adornment, especially beads. Well we have to take a step back and look at what did native people use prior to glass and plastic beads and that was natural materials, like I have in front of me here, that I'm handing to you, we have some porcupine quills in a box here, is that quill work was very popular amongst both of these women's communities. And they would use other things such as deer teeth, shell, clay, very natural materials. And then it wasn't until trade, which the height of it was in the 1800s, is that when traders started coming in; French, Italian, Russia, you name it, is that they started trading with us glass and plastic beads. First glass beads that came in in the 1800s was actually a type of bead that was called a pony bead. And just like this example I'm showing you here, they're a fairly larger bead, the example I have is a plastic version but imagine that being made out of glass, and then even in this beginning stage of looking at what was called a pony bead, and it got that name because it came by horse, is that the pony bead was really popular is that then certain colors started getting popular, whether that be, especially in this area, there was a lot of blue that was really used, a lot of yellow, because those were colors that weren't necessarily found in nature. It didn't mean we couldn't make that color using natural dyes, but it was just something that really sparkled in the pony bead. And then it wasn't until the 1850s when we actually starting getting smaller beads which were then called seed beads and this tiny example I have in front of you here, they're really a lot smaller than the pony bead, and that is again how then the popularity of these started coming in the adornments. So you're going to see that in these two women in the sculpture, they have a combination what looks like to me during this time, is that they would have natural materials and then they would also have new materials. New materials which I noticed on Sakakawea and definitely probably on Winnemucca, is just an example I have of my own, a little piece that I kind of use as examples for interpretation with visitors, is that in my tribe, when I mentioned we also use a type of hide, we actually use a three hide dress in my area, sometimes we use a two hide, we mainly use that for special occasion, but one of the things I wanted to highlight, which is most likely on theirs is this metal material. It kind of looks like little tinklers, you know they definitely remind me of wind chimes when you hear it, you know, when the winds blowing.

That's what is most likely on these women's dresses that they used and they probably got that through trade, especially Sakakawea, especially through all her journeys throughout the different countries. So whether it be metal, whether it be glass, is that those are definitely a combination that I wanted to highlight here, that they would definitely have in their adornments.

>> So let's go and take a closer look at Winnemucca because we can see without this blanket, where Sakakawea is carrying her baby, without that wrapped around her, we really see a lot more of her dress here, a lot more of what she's wearing.

>> Yeah, I would say what really drew us to this piece, and again, really helps with I think interpreting these pieces from a native perspective, you get a lot more detail here. And you can really see some of the natural materials that she most likely combined or the artist really wanted to show in this piece, because the combination of whether it be the representation of how much detail he put into the fringes, because that also takes a while to do, whether you look at, you can see the trade materials like kind of where the hips are, the thigh area, we see these little crosses, which could represent metal pieces that were used, and then what really is fascinating, up above kind of in the bust area, or the shoulders area, is that we see materials that could either be of metal or they could be of, to me they remind me of the duclaw, which is the, how do you describe that, it's that hind part of the hoof. And for a lot of tribes, that was seen as very valuable and so they would take that piece and that could potentially be what's in the front that we see here, but I also see again the combination of natural material and new material, I mean you could even look at her bag here where we see something that either could be embroidery, that could also be maybe like a flat material that's kind of layered upon, maybe just sewn on top of the bag. I think this is a really great depiction of people looking at native perspective of how native people have continued to preserve the culture yet just look at that we always are combining it in different ways. And one of the things I also wanted to notice about this is that there was a part in Sarah's book that talks about when she would get ready to go out to do her talks or do her work, like she would put this on, so this is showing her status, this is showing that this is important what she was doing. It also talks about like that stereotype that the majority of our visitors that we get at our museum, think that when they come to the museum, this is what they're going to see. They're going to see all of us native people dressed in our clothing, our regalia, when in fact, we won't be. We're going to have the same thing that anyone else who walks through our door has on, but when we put on our traditional clothing, that means we're talking business. That means we're ready, you know, we're ready to fight for whatever it is that we're getting ready to fight for or to participate in our culture and so, by having the artist put her in her regalia, it is showing that importance of why she's wearing this, what she's going to do.

>> Yeah, she lectured in an outfit described almost exactly like what we're seeing in front of us, talking about metal bracelets on her arms. But she also would lecture in what they called a smart, silk dress. That she was dressed just the same as the 1880s ladies in the audience. It's very fascinating that she chose which outfit to put on depending on her purpose or how she wanted to convey that. I think that seals in exactly with what you said.

>> It's interesting talking about matrilineal societies, because Winnemucca in her book, like among the Paiutes [inaudible] kind of highlights the differences between the cultures that she grew up in and the dominant culture that she was sort of navigating as she's writing this book and coming to testify before Congress, and she says things like; the women could speak at council, you know, that they were expected to participate politically and they were expected to share in decision making and that they could even get involved in combat in some ways. And she says; our council house is our congress. We have a republic, just like you. And at one point in her book, she actually says; I think if women could go into your congress, justice would be done to the Indians. And then she says, I can't speak for all Indians, but for my people, I know. And goes on to say then I think that's another point that you brought up that, we're talking about a lot of people across a vast area of space and time, and we can't necessarily make these raw generalizations.

>> I think also, in looking at the two structures, because we know what Sarah Winnemucca looked like, and we actually have her firsthand account as she was one of the very few native people to write a book early on, she was the first native woman to do that, compared to Sakakawea's story and history. Like we were saying, there's nothing about her and so I think with the artist being able to have a lot of that information, he was able to really capture her spirit in this sculpture. He was able to capture what tribe she comes from, he was able to capture how important she felt education was to her community, to native people, and even just like with the flower that she's holding in her hand, that is also giving way to the Paiute culture that she comes from because that symbolizes what her name was in this culture. So, in looking at that, being able to have that, you're able to get more of a better sense of history and background information on her and be able to provide more empathetic information to our visitors as opposed to Sakakawea, even just looking at her sculpture itself, she looks like she's 30-something years old, when in fact, she was only 16 when she went on this journey with Lewis and Clark. And so it's very much like even here in the Capitol we have Pocahontas represented in a lot of the paintings that are out here, no one knows that much about Pocahontas. Everything was written for her by John Smith, so you have, you know, these very powerful women in our community but you don't get to hear or see much about that because there's very few firsthand accounts in our histories.

>> Yeah, and I just want to add, one thing that we actually talk a lot about at our museum is we go into what is called, native perspective. And people usually ask us how is it that you do that, but one thing we do besides just general training for our staff, is that we really look at what does that mean? So how we have said what that means is native perspective is providing those perspectives which involves critically evaluating assumptions and stereotypes of native people. Introducing and assessing multiple perspectives and give native perspectives equal priority and authority. So in other words, we know that when we do a lot of this interpretation, is that you can't always just take the firsthand account, you can't just look at the exterior. If you really want to learn about these pieces or even just understand why the artist depicted them the way they did, you have to dig a little bit further to kind of get their perspective, and that's a whole big thing that we do at NMAI, one of our two big things is that we are still here as indigenous people, and that we are diverse and with the diverseness, especially with between these two women because they're

obviously two different tribes, we can even go further into the interpretation of who they are.

>> Yeah, I think from an art historical perspective, there's this tradition in western art of personifying ideas in female form. And I feel like with the Sakakawea statue, a little bit of that creeps in because so little is known about her as an individual person.

>> And a lot of what you say too, even looking at especially Sakakawea, her statue I would say is the most romanticized when compared to Sarah Winnemucca's, and as you're saying, it's because she didn't get to tell her story. It's being told for her and you know, when I first learned about Lewis and Clark in school, she really wasn't mentioned all that much. It was kind of like she was just a tag-along because they had really hired her husband to be the main guide for them and then, you know, as time goes by it's like we're starting to incorporate more of that stereotypical idea of native people into history. And so you start to see a lot more of that romanticized portion, so when people come and they see this, they're like oh yes, I know who Sakakawea was, but do you really know who she was? Everything that you know was told for you by someone else, not her.

[Music]

>> The statue of Sakakawea is actually a recasting of a sculpture created in 1910, by Leonard Cornell, which can be seen at the North Dakota State Capitol. Leonard Cornell was a student of famed sculptor, [inaudible] Taft, who employed a group of young female artists in the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, that were collectively known as the White Rabbits. In our next episode, we'll explore the story of a unique artist who wrote in support of an unconventional dress code for women at the World's Fair. Thank you for listening to Shaping History: Women in Capitol Art. For more information or to book a tour, please go to visitthecapitol.gov. The interviews included in this podcast represent the personal reflections and opinions of the interviewees and should not be considered as the official views or opinions of the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center, the Architect of the Capitol, or members of congress.

[Music]