



# AN INTRODUCTION TO UTAH'S INDIAN HISTORY

## THE INGENUITY OF UTAH'S INDIAN LEADERS

### TEACHER BACKGROUND

Ingenuity, the quality of inborn genius, is invaluable for people who hold positions of leadership. The American Indian leaders of Utah—past and present—have been called upon to draw from their ingenuity to serve their people. In the past, leadership in many American Indian communities fell upon the shoulders of whoever was observed to have the skills most useful to the tribe in that time and place. A person with qualities like wisdom or foresight, or who had the abilities to communicate, negotiate, or problem-solve, would be chosen as a leader. This system has been referred to as “situational leadership.”

Many contemporary tribal governments have leadership structures that tend to follow the spirit of this tradition within guidelines established by constitutions. There are also community leaders who may not hold an office but have earned the respect of others through acts of courage or service. In this lesson, students will learn about five people who represent tribal leadership—both past and present—in a variety of ways.

### OBJECTIVE

The student will be able to identify some of Utah's American Indian leaders and explain their unique contributions to their tribes and the history of Utah.

### TEACHER MATERIALS

*At a Glance: Leadership among Utah's Indians*

*We Shall Remain: The Paiute* (chapter 7, 13:35–15:21)

*We Shall Remain: The Navajo* (chapter 2, 9:35–13:50)

*We Shall Remain: The Goshute* (chapter 2, 3:00–4:00)

### STUDENT MATERIALS

American Indian Leaders

### ADDITIONAL MATERIALS NEEDED

Card stock or blank index cards

Sample trading cards

Arts and crafts supplies

### TIME FRAME - VERSATILE

One and a half standard class periods with homework

Two class periods

### PROCEDURE

Discuss with students the meaning of the words: “famous,” “heroic,” “respected,” “perfect,” “skilled,” and “talented.” Which qualities would they most like to have people associate with them? Which seem most important in our culture? Which do they most often associate with historical figures?



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## PROCEDURE (CONT.)

Based on your classroom discussion, have the students make a list of the qualities or personality traits they think are important for someone to have in order to be a good leader.

Using the information from “*At a Glance: Leadership among Utah’s Indians*,” explain to students how Utah’s Indian tribes and bands were structured politically and what leadership was like within those structures. Explain the difference between the popular perception of the unified Indian tribe, which is what they probably have seen in movies, and the reality of life in bands and extended family groups.

Pass out one “American Indian Leader” to each student. Have them look for the qualities they listed in their sample leader. Have each student create a trading card showing those qualities of their leader (this can be homework).

Put students together in groups to teach each other about the leadership qualities of their historical figure and how those qualities affected the history of their tribe.

## ASSESSMENT/PRODUCTS

Discussion

Qualities list

Trading cards

## VARIATIONS/EXTENSIONS

Using the national *We Shall Remain* documentaries, have the students compare Utah Indians’ methods and models of tribal leadership to those of other American Indians. Some possible clips to show include *We Shall Remain: After the Mayflower* (chapters 3 and 8); *We Shall Remain: Tecumseh’s Vision* (chapters 5, 6, and 7); *We Shall Remain: Trail of Tears* (chapters 1, 2, 5, and 6); and *We Shall Remain: Wounded Knee* (chapter 1).

The students can find additional leaders on the internet and make more cards.

The students can find out about present-day tribal leaders and make cards of their qualities.

The class can have an election and vote for the greatest leader.



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## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

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- Deseret Morning News Editorial Staff. "Mae Parry was a Living Legend." *Deseret Morning News*. March 24, 2007.
- Florez, John. "UTA shows little respect for Native Americans." *Deseret Morning News*. March 30, 2009.
- Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada. *Nuwuvi: A Southern Paiute History*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1976.
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- "Navajo Code Talker, United States Marine Corps: Samuel Tom Holiday." [http://www.lapahie.com/Samuel\\_Tom\\_Holiday\\_NCT.cfm](http://www.lapahie.com/Samuel_Tom_Holiday_NCT.cfm)
- "Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah: Tribal Government." <http://www.utahpaiutes.org/about/government/>
- Reeve, W. Paul. *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes*. Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois, 2006.
- "Samuel Tom Holiday, Navajo Code Talker." <http://www.samuelholiday.com/>.
- Speckman, Stephen. "Groups Sue to Save Fish, Stop Water Grab along Utah-Nevada Border." *Deseret News*. October 1, 2008.

## STANDARDS ADDRESSED

### State Standards

Seventh Grade Social Studies – Utah Studies: 2/1/d; 3/3/c; 5/2/a&c

### Accreditation Competencies

Personal Growth and Character Development/Identifies personal goals and engages in self-assessment/Understands attitudes and attributes of self that contribute to achievement in life

### NCSS Standards

Middle Grades: 1/a; 3/i; 5/a&g; 6/a



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## **AT A GLANCE: LEADERSHIP AMONG UTAH'S INDIANS**

Popular perceptions about Native American leadership are generally shaped by Hollywood portrayals of Indians and focus upon strong, centralized leadership in the person of a single “chief” presiding over an entire tribe. While it is true that powerful chiefs did lead Native American peoples at various times, notions of hierarchical leadership and centralized command are usually by-products of Euro-Americans superimposing their leadership structure and ideals upon Native Americans. This is particularly true of Utah’s tribes.

Power in Utah’s seven tribes, particularly in the centuries before contact with non-Indians, existed indirectly at the most local band level. The Southern Paiutes and Goshutes were the most decentralized. They organized themselves in small extended family bands spread across vast geographic spaces, and the bands were only loosely organized as tribes. Although these Southern Paiute and Goshute bands were detached from each other politically, they were nonetheless tightly connected through marriage and kinship. The various bands formed an extensive safety net of community concern, especially as non-Indian settlement depleted the Paiute population.

The Utes, Navajos, and Shoshones were structured similarly to the Southern Paiutes and Goshutes, but because they lived in larger bands, they had more complex leadership. Their leaders accepted greater central control, especially when they waged war. The Navajos also coalesced into close-knit family groups or clans and were led by warrior leaders and peace leaders.

Leaders among the tribes emerged and were acknowledged through nomination or popular con-

sent. They were people who demonstrated wisdom, ingenuity, and foresight in dealing with challenges that faced their bands. They tended to make decisions through consensus rather than dictatorship or majority rule. Leaders offered counsel and advice and worked to carry out the decisions made at council meetings. Band leaders, or chiefs, served as spokespersons for their bands, especially when dealing with other tribes or outsiders. Among the Southern Paiutes, a band leader began each day with a speech, wherein he instructed band members on the day’s activities and exhorted them according to community values. He served as a guide for hunting and gathering activities and shaped and promoted community standards and morals.

With the acquisition of the horse, the Utes and Shoshones developed a more centralized leadership structure, which in turn gave rise to leaders with more influence. Wakara, who built a vast network of trading and raiding relationships from the Great Plains to California, became one of the most powerful and wealthy Ute leaders. He and his band traded and raided for horses, manufactured goods, and slaves. They captured Southern Paiute and Goshute women and children and sold them into Spanish colonial society as slaves.

Among the tribes, some headmen enjoyed more influence than others. As non-Indian settlers arrived in the Great Basin, the settlers tended to ascribe prestige to various chiefs according to their willingness and ability to forge ties to the Anglo power structure. Mormon authorities, for example, regarded Tut-se-gav-its, the leader of the Santa Clara band, as “head chief” among the Paiutes, a role he filled until his death in 1871. After that, government agents



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viewed Taú-gu as “principal chief” of the Paiute “alliance.” He was leader of the Cedar band and the same man whom Mormons called Coal Creek John. When John Wesley Powell, as special government Indian agent, negotiated with the Southern Paiutes, it was Taú-gu whom Powell viewed as the primary representative of the entire tribe. Taú-gu resisted Powell’s efforts at moving the Southern Paiutes to the Uintah Reservation in 1873, instead arguing for several small reservations for each of the Southern Paiute bands.

Not all band leaders in a given tribe adopted the same policy or agenda for a given issue. With the arrival of Mormon settlers in particular, some Indian leaders were willing to cooperate with the Mormons, while others advocated resistance, a factor that sometimes led to factional splits. Sometimes government officials negotiated only with a few tribal leaders but applied the resultant agreement to all members of a given tribe, even to those who had not consented.

Shamans, or medicine men, were also well-respected leaders in Indian communities. Among the Southern Paiutes, shamans could be either male or female tribal members who possessed keen spiritual awareness and came to their power through unsolicited dreams. Some shamans gained reputations as specialists. A rattlesnake shaman treated snakebites, a spider doctor specialized in insect bites, and a rock shaman worked with injuries received in falls from cliffs or trees. Particularly successful shamans commanded the respect and reverence of tribal members and were valued for their examples and spiritual wisdom.

As the various tribes transitioned into the twentieth century, political and governmental structures patterned after the Euro-American political system slowly evolved. This evolution is most noticeable among the Navajos, who in 1901 divided their reservation into five geographic districts, each presided

over by a governing agency. The Northern Agency, comprising the Utah section, is headquartered at Shiprock. In 1923 the Navajo created a legislative business council in order to have a formal organizational structure and entity through which the tribe could negotiate with outside business interests. The present-day Navajo Tribal Council, with an elected tribal chairperson, grew out of the earlier business council.

One Navajo leader also became politically influential outside of tribal politics. In San Juan County, where 54 percent of the population is Native American, a Navajo Democrat, Mark Maryboy, became the first Native American to hold elective office in Utah after voters chose him as one of three county commissioners in 1986. He served a total of four terms. At the 1992 Democratic National Convention he met President Bill Clinton and offered a prayer in Navajo at one of the sessions.

Like the Navajos, other Utah tribes adopted leadership structures in the twentieth century, presided over by a tribal chairperson, generally with some form of tribal council. Tribal leaders in the twenty-first century, much like their nineteenth-century predecessors, are frequently engaged in important leadership functions that involve asserting and maintaining tribal sovereignty, addressing land and water issues, working for the economic betterment of their peoples, securing health care and education, preserving and celebrating their languages and cultures, and passing tribal values on to the next generation.

[More about Code-Talkers!](#)

[More Utah Leaders!](#)

## RUPERT STEELE, GOSHUTE



*Rupert Steele*

Rupert Steele is the Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Indian Reservation. He has fought to see the interests of his tribe served on many issues.

Using diplomacy and working within the system, Chairman Steele has made sure the voice of the Goshutes cannot be ignored. When Utah Transit Authority proposed building a train depot on land containing artifacts of value to the Goshute tribe, Rupert Steele sent letters to every lawmaker in the Utah state legislature. He also is working to protect the water rights of his homeland. The State of Nevada is interested in pumping water from near the border with Utah. The loss of this water could cause harm to the ecosystem of the Goshute Reservation, and may cause a rare species of fish found only in Utah to be added to the endangered species list. Chairman Steele is working with the Center for Biological Diversity and Trout Unlimited to keep this from happening.

Chairman Steele has earned the respect of the people in his tribe and in the larger community for his intelligence, humility, perseverance, and dedication to preserving the Goshute culture.

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## SAMUEL HOLIDAY, NAVAJO



*Samuel Holiday*

Samuel Holiday was born in a hogan near Monument Valley. He is best known for serving his country as a Navajo Code Talker in World War II. He served in the Pacific on the islands of Roi-Namur, Tinian, Saipan, and Iwo Jima. Navajo Code Talkers helped turn the tide of the war by keeping the enemy from being able to understand the messages sent between the centers of command and the troops. Throughout World War II, teams of Navajo Code Talkers transmitted hundreds of messages. The messages were transmitted with one hundred percent accuracy. The code was never deciphered by the enemy and no one revealed the secret.

The Code Talkers were asked to take an oath to keep what they were doing a secret. Even after the war was over, Samuel Holiday kept his oath. He did not even tell his family what the Code Talkers had done in the war until 1969. The government declassified the Code Talker program in 1968. Samuel Holiday is a humble man who would not allow the Marines to honor him for his service unless other Code Talkers were also recognized. His courage to face the dangers of war made him a hero.

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## TUT-SE-GEV-ITS, SOUTHERN PAIUTE

Tut-se-gav-its, or Tutsegavit, was one of many important leaders of the Southern Paiutes who led in the early years of contact with Mormon settlers. Tut-se-gav-its was a leader of the Southern Paiutes who made their home along the Santa Clara River. When whites began to settle on their land, Tut-se-gav-its and other Southern Paiute leaders attempted to form an alliance with the Utes, who had been their enemies, to keep the whites out. However, Tut-se-gav-its later changed his mind and decided that the Mormons could help protect the Paiutes from the powerful Utes.

Tut-se-gav-its became a member of the LDS Church. He served as an intermediary between different Southern Paiute bands and white leaders. He also became a farmer. In keeping with the Paiutes' traditional practice of irrigating, he built small dams that improved the land for agriculture.

White settlers considered Tut-se-gav-its the "chief" of the Southern Paiutes. However, he was really an influential spokesman for the Southern Paiute councils, which were made up of many members of the community and made most of the decisions. Tut-se-gav-its did not necessarily tell the Southern Paiutes what to do, but his ability to communicate and negotiate with the non-Indians who were interfering with Paiute life made him a valuable leader.

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## MAE TIMBIMBOO PARRY, NORTHWESTERN BAND OF SHOSHONE



*Mae Timbimboo Parry*

Mae Parry was born at Washakie, Utah. She was a leader within the Northwestern Shoshone tribe. She served many offices, including vice-chairperson and acting chairperson. As a dedicated historian, she recorded the history of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone and made it available to all the people of Utah. She taught the history and culture of her people through her words and writings. Her work to tell the story of the Bear River Massacre helped it to be recognized for what it truly was: a massacre. Before that it had been called the "Battle of Bear River," but it was not really a "battle" because the army slaughtered many unarmed Shoshones, including women and children.

Parry also kept the Shoshone tradition of beadwork alive by creating beautiful pieces and teaching others the skill. She worked with the Utah state legislature to get the Native American Graves Protection Act passed so that Indian burial sites would be protected. The state of Utah has honored her twice: as Utah Mother of the Year in 1987 and with the Utah Women's Achievement Award. By keeping the stories of the Shoshones alive for the people of Utah, she has done a great service for our entire state.

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# CHIPETA, UTE



*Chipeta*

Chipeta was born as a member of the Ute tribe. Before whites began settling on their lands, the Utes freely traveled with the changing seasons through their vast homeland. This was the Ute lifestyle when Chipeta was born. By the time of Chipeta's death, the Utes had been moved to a reservation in northeastern Utah.

At the age of sixteen, Chipeta married Chief Ouray, and together they were respected for their wisdom and courage. By the time she was thirty, Chipeta had been invited by Ouray to join him in treaty negotiations. The other men were shocked and confused to have a woman in their presence, but Ouray valued her opinions. Eventually Ouray and Chipeta became respected visitors in Washington D.C. Chipeta was respected among the Ute people and was the only woman of her time welcomed to the chief's meetings.

Chipeta also is remembered as a friend to her white neighbors, having once rode out to their settlement to warn them of a coming raid. She loved all children and cared for orphaned children with the last of her wealth.

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