



Native Sons

Equipping Native Leaders to Reach Native Americans

SAVENA ROGERS

- POINTS OF INTEREST**
- The Paiutes were highly sophisticated botanists whose diet included over 96 species of edible plants.
 - Major Paiute social gatherings occurred around the fall pine nut harvest and spring fish spawning.
 - Paiute communities are largely scattered with few large reservations.
 - Information for the historical article came from everyculture.com; utahindians.org; warpaths2peacepipes.org; and native-american-indian-facts.com

- PRAYER POINTS**
- New financial partners.
 - AIC as it transitions with Southwestern Assembly of God University (SAGU).
 - Wisdom to minister effectively.
 - The spiritual and educational growth of our students.

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"I bet you want to bring me here" Savena said to God when visiting AIC with her cousin. She had come along for the ride and to watch his children while he took the entrance exams. She had just read "the 12 things of a spiritual life" written by another student in sharpie on the bottom side of an upper bunkbed and thought, "I wish I could be like that, I wish I could do that."

Savena is from the Yerington Paiute Tribe in Nevada. Originally, the Paiute lived on good "luscious land", but were pushed off it by the government and white settlers. The Paiute chief at that time refused to sign a treaty ceding Smith Valley to the whites. After killing the treaty-offering general the chief was buried with the treaty in Smith Valley. As a young boy, her great grandfather witnessed this chief's death and burial before being forced to walk across the mountains from Smith Valley, CA to Yerington, NV. Later he returned looking for the grave, but could not find it. He became the first chairman of the Yerington Paiute tribe.

Savena states the Paiutes were originally "squatters, because they lived anywhere." Her grandmother and her people came from the Mono Lake area (by Yosemite, CA). They were forced into wagons and driven to Nevada, although some were taken to the Fresno area. She was raised in traditional Native spirituality and went to various medicine men for help. She was

cursed by one of the medicine men and unable to be near powerlines afterwards, as a result her husband needed to carry her home through a river during the winter. One day she heard a voice while working in a potato field say, Betty, go to church." She heard the voice say the same thing a second time, but there was no one around.



Savena Rogers

That night she went to a revival service on the Rez. She gave her life to Christ, was baptized in the Spirit, and entirely healed. She then brought her family to the revival service and all committed to Christ and were Spirit baptized.

Savena's father knew the Lord from the time he was young. Her mother grew up in traditional Native spirituality. Her father was a medicine man, but she gave her life

to Jesus after meeting Savena's father and family.

Savena and her family attended the church her grandmother had pioneered. When her grandmother passed away the church and its families fractured. Her family began attending a church in town. "It was a good church, but I did not really know what Christianity was." She had a sense of the problems that caused the collapse of her grandmother's church and really did not know what to feel about Christianity. She believes her father struggled with these issues too, as a result, "We were not steady in the church."

As a senior in high school Savena wanted to attend a Native school and play college volleyball. She was accepted at Haskell Indian Nations University, needing only her transcripts sent to enter. She was scheduled to begin summer classes, but her high school sent her transcripts too late. She was then involved in a car crash that nearly took her life. Although she had a "back up plan" to attend another community college, these two events shook her. She blamed God thinking He did not love her because He was not helping her to go where she wanted and do the things she wanted. She began to think of herself as another Rez statistic, an-

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

We have just passed midterms and the spring break here at AIC. My classes are going well. I am creating one new class and totally revising another. I am not taking a doctoral class this semester, because none that I needed were offered, but am planning to take a summer course on Biblical History and Archeology—in Israel (lord willing)! This means that I will not be able to do an itineration tour this summer, but will plan to be in the Northern and Southern New England next summer.

Theresa continues to enjoy teaching preschool and has been enjoying an "easy" group this year (not too many behavioral problems). Her mother, Shirley came to stay with us at the beginning of December and plans to return to Vermont late this month. They have

enjoyed seeing each other and spending time together. Our grandsons are also especially fond of having "grand-mammie" here.

Levi has returned to classes at Fuller this semester. He especially likes the biblical studies classes and has taken to calling me to discuss the things he is learning on Tuesday and/or Friday evenings after class. Alicia is pregnant as a surrogate for my niece (who she became close friends with in WA) and her husband who are unable to have children of their own and is due in early summer. This is quite a gift and all involved are very excited.

Caleb and Natasha have just purchased

their first home and are living outside of Atlanta, GA. They continue to serve as paramedics for fire departments and are both working on further training to be certified as fire fighters.

Men say that women should come with instructions...

What's the point of that? have you ever seen a man

Actually read the instructions?



other Indian girl stuck on the Rez in a dead-end life. "I was so mad at God that I gave up on Him. I turned to smoking and drinking. I felt I had kept myself pure for so long, always listening to my parents and doing what I was supposed to do... Throughout 2014 God allowed me to do what I wanted until I grew tired and my heart began to change. I felt I had become addicted to smoking and needed help. Because I was not doing what I intended I felt I could not do anything. I had dropped out of school because I did not have the financial assistance I needed to continue. I was at a lake drinking with a friend, sitting there drunk in the water I began praying, 'If You want me to follow You, You have to get me out of here.'"

Shortly after this an Auntie invited her to a Joyce Meyer's conference. Phil Whickham played a song that touched her heart and she sensed God's love in way she never had in church. She responded to an altar call, rededicating her life to Jesus and committing herself to serve as a worker in God's kingdom. She returned home and was baptized during a Christian concert in a local park. "I really felt that my sins were washed away." Shortly afterwards she smoked again, but felt convicted and cried out confessing what she had done. "I realized I really needed to leave; that nothing on the Rez would help me with this walk, that I had no real examples of how to walk with the Lord." A month later her cousin invited her to visit AIC with him.

After sensing that God might want her to attend AIC

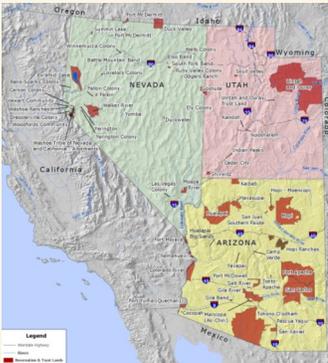
she filled out an application, but did not follow up. The school repeatedly contacted her, but she refused the calls. Finally, a week before the semester was to begin, she took a call, but offered many legitimate excuses why she could not come. When the school directed her to someone who was willing to buy a plane ticket for her to come, she yielded.

She was excited to be at a Native school and to have friends that were serving Jesus. She loved chapel and soaked in all the speakers said constantly going to the altar for prayer. "I finally found many examples of those who were actually walking with God and seeking His will for their lives. I had friends my age and we would spend time together and pray for each other. Every single class opens my mind... This is what I had prayed for." Yet Savena is also sad for those back home who are not receiving the opportunity she is. "It makes me evaluate my life and how I want my ministry to go, and what I want people to know, especially my people. God is really moving here in AZ, but not so much in NV, the reservation and towns are not being affected by His presence."

Savena acknowledges that she is still working on issues in her own life; things that she had not admitted even to herself before. "I think I did not know grace before, here we are more free to mess up. We do not even have a word for love in my language, perhaps that is why we have a hard time expressing it. Here, I am experiencing the love and grace that I had not known in the past."

She lives in town and notes that the Rez is "on the ugly side of town" where little grows because it is so dry. She went to public schools growing up and had generally good experiences, but has encountered racism. She notes that among Native people many parents have not succeeded educationally. Those in dominant society save for their children's education, but this is generally not so among Native people. Many grow up not knowing what a new car is. Although some tribes provide scholarships for education not all do. Her tribe is too small and low on education benefits so has limited scholarship funding. Savena did once receive a tribal scholarship for \$200.

Many Native students are "dropped" educationally in the public schools and college. Savena is only the third person in her family to earn a college degree (she is in her junior year), the other two were from the previous generation. She states that at her community college the instructors, "did not care whether I passed or not" but, "at AIC the teachers sit down and work to help you. They care here. Its not about a degree at all, its about completing God's will and doing His will." When she graduates Savena wants to return to her reservation and work to spread God's love. Eventually, she hopes to pioneer churches on her Rez as well as throughout Nevada.



SW Tribal Areas

Paiute means "true Ute" or "water Ute" and indicates the ancient relationship between the Utes and Paiutes. The Paiutes call themselves "Numa" which means "The People."

Originally, a nomadic people that inhabited the Great Basin region of the western US, the Paiutes are comprised of three main groups today: The Northern Paiute of OR, CA, ID, and NV. The Southern Paiutes of AZ, NV, UT, and southeaster CA. The Owens Valley Paiutes of CA & NV.

Among the most well known Paiutes was Wovoka, a medicine man and founder of the Ghost Dance. His teachings included the resurgence of Native people, the appearance of a Native messiah, the magical protection of the Ghost Dance linen shirt to protect from bullets, and the disappearance of the whites from Native lands. Though his ceremony was peaceful it was part of what led to the Wounded Knee massacre of the Sioux at Pine Ridge. Savena notes that she is related to Wovoka, but also calls him a false prophet who was involved in

The Paiute People



Wolvoka—Medicine man

that lived and travelled together. Diet varied according to the area and movement from place to place was dependent upon the seasons and changing weather patterns. Clothes varied from shirts, dresses, and leggings made from the woven bark pulp to rabbit fur and deer hide buckskin. The people fished, hunted with bows, farmed corn, squash, and other vegetables, gathered berries, nuts and other wild food.

Savena's family originally came from the Mono Lake and Yosemite area of California's northern Sierra Mountain region. The Paiutes were known as a generally peaceful people and initially did not adopt the use of horses as other tribes did. In 1776 Spanish explorers were the first whites to make contact with the people and quickly began enslaving the Paiutes. Throughout the 1800s American trappers, traders, and settlers brought further incursion into Paiute lands and life. In

black magic and intentional deception of the people.

As a nomadic people, individual bands consisted of small groups of families

1830 Congress established the Indian Removal Acts and in 1848 gold was found in CA and in 1857 the Comstock Lode silver had been discovered. These events led to white aggression against the Paiute and the destruction of the food sources they depended upon. By the mid 1800s the Paiutes started using horses and guns to protect themselves from whites and hostile tribes.

Like all the other tribes, the Paiutes were decimated by white disease, intentional starvation, and war. They were forced from their homelands onto reservations that could not support them and the government constantly took more land even from these. In the 1950's with the federal termination act that sought to force Native assimilation the Paiutes lost needed government funding to survive as well as tribal recognition. Nearly half the tribal members died from 1954-1980 due to the lack of basic health resources, another 15,000 acres of tribal lands were lost, and the pride and cultural identity of the tribe was further reduced. In the late 1970's the tribe fought to regain federal recognition which was granted in 1980.

Today, the Paiute continue to work to develop their tribal areas and to meet the needs of their people.

