



Voices of American Indian Assimilation and Resistance: Helen Hunt Jackson, Sarah Winnemucca, and Victoria Howard

Slobhan Senier

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Between 1879 and 1934, the United States government made a concerted effort to dissolve tribes by dividing communally-held lands and forcing American Indians to adopt Euro-American practices. Three progressive women seized a wave of national fascination with American Indians to fashion themselves as public storytellers and challenge the national drive to assimilate indigenous peoples. This book focuses on these remarkable women: white writer and activist Helen Hunt Jackson, whose 1884 bestseller *Ramona* has been called "the Indian *Uncle Tom's Cabin*"; the Paiute lecturer, educator, and political activist Sarah Winnemucca, whose *Life Among the Piutes* is believed to be the first Native American woman's autobiography; and Victoria Howard, the Clackamas Chinook storyteller who worked with Melville Jacobs in 1929 to transcribe hundreds of narratives, ethnographies, and songs. Senier is the first author to analyze the texts of these three women so closely. She convincingly argues that these complex texts have been misinterpreted as supporting the policy of assimilation, when they actually opposed the male, authoritarian voice.

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