

Pride Month



We'wha

We'wha was a Lhamana, a Zuni Two Spirit person, who occupied both male and female roles within the tribe. They were an important cultural ambassador, spiritual leader, and pottery and textile artist and worked to preserve the history, traditions and knowledge of the Zuni tribe.¹

We'wha was born in 1849 in what is now New Mexico and was orphaned as a child; they remained a part of their mother's clan but maintained ceremonial ties to their father's clan.¹ Though they were born into a male's body, as early as the age of 3 or 4 they demonstrated traits the Zuni associated with Lhamana, which in the tribe are male-bodied people who take on roles traditionally performed by women; Lhamana also often wear women's clothing.¹ We'wha was instructed primarily in female tasks, such as how to grind and prepare corn.¹ They also were trained in pottery and weaving and were the first of the Zuni to sell their pottery and textiles.¹ They helped perform rituals in spiritual ceremonies and became a member of the medicine society.¹

In 1885, We'wha visited Washington, D.C., as an Indian delegate. Everyone believed them to be a cisgender female, so their participation garnered a great deal of attention as it was rare for females to be delegates at this time.¹ We'wha died at the age of 49 from heart disease.¹

References

1. We'wha. (n.d.). National Women's History Museum. Retrieved May 23, 2022, from <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/wewha>

