

**“We The People”: Migrant Waves in the Making of America**  
**Virtual NEH Summer Institute**  
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**The Yaqui Tribe**

(by Susana Pederson and Zulma Tobos)

The Yoeme – also known as Yaquis-- are an indigenous people who speak a Uto-Aztecan-based language in their ancestral homeland in Mexican State of Sonora. Following and during many conflicts with the Mexican government, numerous Yaquis were forced into slavery in the Yucatan, which gave rise to a mass migration of Yaquis to the Southwest United States. Pascolas (old men of the fiestas) Deer Dancers and Chapayekas are iconic figures in Yaqui traditions. Easter is central to their annual ceremonial cycle and thus they are known as the Pascua Yaqui, now a federally recognized Indian Tribe in Arizona (since 1978).

**Guiding Inquiry Questions**

1. Something very common in this country is how people have struggled for civil rights. What kind of experience have Yaqui people and the Tribe had with civil rights issues?
2. We know that Sally Gonzalez is the first Native American lady as senator from the south of Arizona, who represents a legislative District in Tucson that includes the Pascua Yaqui Reservation. How successful and effective has she been in her representation?
3. The Yaquis have their own traditions, ceremonies, and beliefs. Some of these traditions have evolved as a mix of Native beliefs and mixed with Christianity. How has it been this process?
4. Yaqui traditional dance. What is the significance of this dance, is it part of a ceremony? What is the meaning of their dance attire?
5. Some material we have read in the seminar refer to both Yoeme and Yaqui. Is the name of the same indigenous community? Why is there a difference in names?
6. According to some newspaper archives in the Library of Congress, Yaquis were originally from present-day Sonora, Mexico. Why did they migrate to Arizona?
7. We have read about different tribes in Arizona and how they have survived Spanish colonization and dominance by Hispanic and Anglo cultures. How have Yaquis handled these transitions and their adaptation in general?
8. We have read about how each tribe has struggled to retain their integrity as a people who share a common language, culture and traditions. How are Yaquis related or connected with Navajos, Tohono O’odham, or other tribes in this struggle?
9. What are the ways in which the Yaqui tribe had contributed to the changes toward a federally recognized tribe?
10. How does learning about the Yaqui tribes in Arizona and in Mexico help us to better understand their relationship and their influence in tribal rights?

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Arizona State Legislature, Senate Members. [www.azleg.gov](http://www.azleg.gov)

We found here a lady yaqui as a senate member: Sally Ann Gonzalez by District 3 (Party Democrat)

2. **DeGrazia**, Ted “Yaqui Easter Documentary”- Ted DeGrazia narrates through his art the Yaqui ceremony of Easter. [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
3. **Endrezze**, Anita (2020). Anita Endrezze reads and discusses: Thirteen Ways of Looking at an Indian on June 29, 2020. Audio. [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

Anita Endrezze is reciting this poem that she wrote: Thirteen Ways of Looking at an Indian

4. **Gomez**, Ramon posing by his mural at Pascua Viejo. Photo. The Pascua Yaqui Connection. As printed in Larry Evers, ed. The South Corner of Time. Tucson, Ariz.: The University of Arizona Press, ©1980, p. 214-221. [www.arizona.edu](http://www.arizona.edu)

What we see in the background of this photo is the mural at Pascua Viejo made by Ramon Gomez who is in the right of the photo. In the mural we can observe part of the rituals with a dancer and a musician in a Yaqui community.

5. **Highsmith**, Carol M. (2015). Photograph, digital. Rick Medina, right, a Yaqui Apache whose tribe is centered in Arizona, and his son, Miles Medina. [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

What we see in the photo is Rick Medina, right, a Yaqui Apache whose tribe is centered in Arizona, and his son, Miles Medina. They were among the participants at a Colorado Springs Native American Inter Tribal Powwow and festival in that central Colorado city.

6. **Leon**, Daniel posing by his mural at Pascua Viejo. Photo. The Pascua Yaqui Connection. As printed in Larry Evers, ed. The South Corner of Time. Tucson, Ariz.: The University of Arizona Press, ©1980, p. 214-221. [www.arizona.edu](http://www.arizona.edu)

What we see in the background of this photo is the mural at Pascua Viejo made by Daniel Leon who is in the left of the photo. In the mural we can observe part of the rituals with a dancer in a Yaqui community.

7. **López Obrador** apologizes to the Yaqui for more than a century of trouble: “They wanted to exterminate them ... it’s a shame for Mexico.” August 6, 2020. [www.newsbeezer.com](http://www.newsbeezer.com)

In this picture posted by newsbeezer we can observe some Yaqui ladies wearing beautiful blue dresses in the ceremony in which the president of Mexico, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, apologizes to the Yaqui tribe in Sonora Mexico. (The ladies’ faces were not so happy)

8. Map -- Yaqui Country. As printed in Larry Evers, ed. The South Corner of Time. Tucson, Ariz.: The University of Arizona Press, ©1980, p. [www.arizona.edu](http://www.arizona.edu)

In this map we observe where the Yaqui tribe was located in both Sonora - Mexico and Arizona - United States.

9. Native Myth: Yaqui Dance in Sonora, Mexico- A narrative of the myth of the Dance of the deer using the murals at the museum in Sonora, Mexico. [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

10. Newspaper Image 8 of Evening star (Washington, D.C.), August 26, 1903 ... feminine members of the great Yaqui tribe in its rebellion against the authority of President... [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

Article about when some Yaqui women organized a rebellion against the authority of the then president of Mexico.

11. Newspaper Image 8 of Evening star (Washington, D.C.), January 14, 1918 ... claimed by the Indians. The Yaqui tribes were originally agricultural people, with a bent... [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

Article about Yaqui tribes that were originally agricultural people in Sonora Mexico.

12. **Padilla, Stan** (1998) "Deer Dancer-Yaqui Legends of Life"- Artist and educator Stan Padilla presents Yaqui myths and legends along with his dynamic drawings and commentary.

13. Pascola Dancers, Fiesta de Gracitudo, Pascua Pueblo. Photo. Dorothy Fannin A Portfolio. As printed in Larry Evers, ed. The South Corner of Time. Tucson, Ariz.: The University of Arizona Press, ©1980, p. 214-221'. [www.arizona.edu](http://www.arizona.edu)

In this photo we can see three pascolas dancers ready for the performance and one musician practicing with his violin.

14. **Ray, Mary Lyn** (2014) "Deer Dancer"- In this mesmerizing picture book from the author of the New York Times bestselling Stars, a young ballerina finds dancing inspiration in the natural world.

15. **Savala, Refugio** (1955) Photo. Pascua Village, Arizona State Museum, U of A, George Iacono.

Refugio Savala is a Yaqui poet and translator. Born in Sonora Mexico, in 1904, he was brought by his parents into United States during the height of the persecution and deportation of Yaquis by the Mexican Government.

16. **Spicer, Edward H.** (1940) "Pascua Yaqui Village in Arizona"-A portrait of the Yaqui Indian village of Pascua, located on the outskirts of Tucson, Arizona, outlines the village's history, economics, customs of kinship, and complex religious ceremonial organization and practices.

17. The Process of Federal Recognition- In this article from the JSTOR digital library it explains the process of the federal recognition of the Yaqui tribe. [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)

18. The Yaquis become American Indians- In this article by the digital library of U of A it explains the process and time the Yaqui became American Indians and the separation of the American and Mexican Yaqui tribe. [www.repository.arizona.edu](http://www.repository.arizona.edu)

19. **Valenzuela Kaczurkin, Mini.** (1977). Yoeme: Lore of the Arizona Yaqui People. This book is probably the best source on contemporary Yaqui oral traditions.

20. **Valenzuela Kaczurkin, Mini.** (1980) Let's Make thunder. As printed in Larry Evers, ed. The South Corner of Time. Tucson, Ariz.: The University of Arizona Press, ©1980, p. 191-192 [www.arizona.edu](http://www.arizona.edu)

This is a poem written by Mini Valenzuela. It explains the significance of the Pascolas performance. When they dance they imitate the rain.

21. **Viri, Denis** (2021). Interview about the Yaqui Tribe. Wednesday July 7th. Interview covering history and contemporary issues of Yaquis living in Arizona. Discuss tribal recognition in customs and ceremonies.

22. Yaqui History Timeline- This timeline was created with the purpose of explaining the chronological events in the life of the Yaqui people and the changes in their history. [www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com)

23. Yaqui Tribe- In this historical article we learned the different events in history that led to the rebellions and the victories of the Yaqui people to become a federally recognized tribe. [www.onlytribal.com](http://www.onlytribal.com)
24. **Zatarain Tumbaga**, Ariel (2018) "Yaqui Indigeneity"- [www.uapress.arizona.edu](http://www.uapress.arizona.edu) The Yaqui warrior is a persistent trope of the Mexican nation. But using fresh eyes to examine Yoeme indigeneity constructs, appropriations, and efforts at reclamation in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Mexican and Chicana/o literature provides important and vivid new opportunities for understanding. ...