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HOW THE WEST WIND FOUND HIS POWER

The following interesting story was written by George Umtuch, one of our Chemawa students:

Once in ages gone by the North Wind and the West Wind lived as people. There was an old man and his wife who had a son that was almost a giant. This son was married to a young girl from the south and they lived near the Columbia River. They were the West Wind family. West Wind used to fish for sturgeon in the Columbia. West Wind's father saved the oil from the sturgeon and kept it in wooden buckets. They had five wooden buckets full stored up.

All the people were suffering with colds and the question arose as to how they could stop the North Wind from making his powerful cold winds that would crystalize the water and make the people suffer with the colds?

The West Wind always brought gladness and warmth, and the people decided to have a combat between the West Wind and the North Wind, and see which one would take possession of the country.

This old man and lady depended on their manly son to hold a grudge against the mighty North Wind. The North Wind family was made up of five brothers and one sister. Everything was prepared for this match. They agreed that if the North Wind put West Wind down once, or vice versa, that was enough. The match was to be held on smooth ice. North Wind had the advantage in number, while the West Wind's son was a giant in size.

West Wind was going to pour oil on the ice as it would harden and help him to get a foothold. North Wind was going to pour water on it so it would freeze and make the surface slicker. West Wind poured out the oil first and North Wind poured out water later and it washed the hardened oil away from the surface of the ice arena. The match was held before the tribes assembled. West Wind wrestled with the older North Wind brother first.

They wrestled with bare feet, always standing until the ice was rough. West Wind poured more oil on the ice to keep it rough, but he made the mistake of pouring his oil first and it hardened and North Wind poured water over it and when West Wind met North

Wind he could not keep his foothold and so lost the first match. So the weather continued very cold—lots of snow and ice on the Columbia River. Young West Wind died of a broken spirit.

West Wind's wife went south where the weather was hot. She asked her mother-in-law to hang up in the tepee an eagle feather (that represents a boy) and a cedar tree root (that represents a girl). Baskets are made from these roots. When the feather or cedar would fall then a child would be born of the sex they represented. In about one year the feather fell. Later the boy was born. The mother took the best of care of him and constantly talked to him about some day defeating North Wind.

The mother reared the boy in the best possible way. She taught him to be fearless and held before him the idea that some day he would defeat North Wind and drive him from the land where his family were then suffering with cold. He listened silently and early resolved in his own mind to redeem his people. This thought was with him constantly. He made himself stronger by twisting, pulling and exercising upon young pine trees. He strengthened them also and today it takes great power to bring down a pine tree, for their roots were strengthened by his training. He went north to the Columbia River and followed it on the south side as far as Mt. Hood. Here he showed his strength and pulled and reset many pines on the sides of the mountains. The pines are growing there now. He went to the summit of the range. What a wonderful sight! The whole world before him! He saw the tepee of his grandparents. It was near where Rock Creek, Washington, now stands. A sad feeling came over him, and he cried. He went to their home, arriving there in the early evening. The old man said, "Where are you going and what are you doing?" The boy replied that he was there to look after him as his grandson. The old man was very glad.

They made five baskets to fish for sturgeon in the river. The next morning they started fishing. North Winds lived near these old people and they noticed that they were very happy. They saw how busy they were, but did not know the grandson was there. When these old people went out fishing it was the habit of

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