

CHEMAWA AMERICAN

Printed at Chemawa, Oregon and Devoted to the Interests of Indian Education

Vol. XXXI

Wednesday, May 7, 1930

No 34

INDIAN LEGENDS

The following interesting Indian legends were written by Celia K. Husik and it is a pleasure for us to give them space:

TALE OF THE SALT LAKES

A long time ago when the salt lakes of New Mexico were of fresh water, inhabited by numerous fishes and other living things, there lived within their depths the wicked old lake man. Once there came by an Indian hunter in search of game. Him the lake man addressed and said:

"Come and live with me, for I have plenty of food and shelter for you and for your family."

And so it came about that the young Indian hunter with his wife and little son came to live with the lake man. It was not long after their arrival that the old man plotted against the hunter and put him out of the way.

When the boy grew up the lake man decided that he too must go. Soon an opportunity presented itself to carry out his wicked design. The young Indian's mother became very ill and in order to save her life she must have some ice from the Lake of the Sun. Thus the young man was sent upon a journey east to the Lake of the Sun from which no man was ever known to return. But the Trues, who are the gods that watch over all, were kind to him. After meeting many hardships and undergoing the many severe tests to which the gods subjected him he obtained the precious piece of ice and returned to the lake.

On beholding the youth return, the wicked lake man was beside himself with wrath, and once more sent the youth upon a perilous journey to the south feeling sure that this time he would never return. One day as the old man was looking out over the lake he beheld the young Indian returning. It was a dark and cloudy day, the sky was overcast, and great forks of lightning were leaping over the waters. Just as the youth was approaching home a flash struck the wicked man and tore him asunder.

The youth took his mother, who had been mourning for him as dead, and departed forever. Ere he departed he prayed to the Trues that they may curse the lakes. They harkened to his prayer, and from that day to

this the lakes remained accursed. Their waters are salty, and no living thing exists in them.

STORY OF SWAN ISLAND

There is an island on Horn Pond, Mass., that the Indians named Swan Island. How this island rose from the bottom of this pond and how it received its name is the subject of this Indian tale.

A tribe of Indians once dwelt upon the shores of Lake Initou, known to the white man as Horn Pond. There they lived and flourished and worshipped the many lesser gods, the spirits of the air, wood and water. Thus they lived for a long time, until finally a change came in their fortune. There was pestilence in their midst, famine in the valleys, and death and devastation everywhere. What should they do?

Once the chief, Wakima, leader of the tribe, came to the banks of the lake and sat there pondering in sorrow until he fell asleep. In his dream he saw a vision and heard a voice. The voice counseled him to address in daily prayer the Great Spirit, Manitou, the ruler of all things upon earth and sky, and to ask his help. For the Great Spirit, he said, was angry because the tribe had worshiped all the lesser Gods and had forgotten the all-powerful Manitou.

"Go to your people," continued the voice, "bid them pray, and when you have played long and well return to the lake with all your tribe. If Manitou is satisfied he will send a token to show that his anger has been appeased."

Then Wakima assembled his people and told them all that had happened. The whole tribe prayed to the Great Spirit, and after some time all assembled upon the lake shore. As they were rowing about the lake in their canoes there suddenly appeared in their midst a beautiful shining swan, which rested upon the waters for awhile and then slowly disappeared. The next day upon that very spot arose a new island, which the Indians called Swan Island.

Supt. Lipps left last Friday evening for Tulalip, Washington, on business connected with the school at that place. At the time of leaving he expected to arrive back home in Chemawa today.