

# STEELYAI, THE COYOTE, WAS A GOD

Queer Belief Among Ancient Indian Regarding Now Despised Animal

The most despised animal of the inland empire is the coyote, that slinking beast of the prairie lands and woods that preys upon the sheep and flocks and poultry of the farmer and stockman. And yet this animal was the most noble to the Indians of the northwest in olden times. At least their great and powerful (Coyote) had the form and many of the attributes of this animal.

Though there has been much written about the great Spirit or Manitou of the Indians and thus creating the belief that they were monotheists as a matter of fact, according to authorities who have investigated the matter, the Indians put out of the northwest but of the whole continent had as many gods as the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Most of their gods had the form of animals and there was a great host of lesser gods among them that a long time ago there was an ancient race of people, gigantic in size, who were the forebears of the Indian race. The present animals and birds are small and insignificant in comparison. They have degenerated or less put down, have lost the power of speech and have none of the wonderful gifts they once had. In these ancient days they had the power to transform themselves into anything they chose, they could swim over vast distances in the twinkling of an eye were diviners of thought, were endowed with prophetic vision and controlled all of the forces of nature.

Thus the bear, the beaver, the eagle, the muskrat and many other animals were gods in those days and the earth was full of violence.

The greater preyed upon the lesser, the strong trampled upon and devoured the weak. Each animal god was wholly selfish and chaos and terror reigned until Coyote wrought order out of the confusion, conquered the monster destroyers and established law and precedents. Thus he became the greatest of all gods and was regarded by the Indians as the one god who was eternally their friend. Much of Indian legendary concerns itself with the exploits and adventures of Steelyai or Coyote.

Coyote was endowed by the Indians with vast power. He could transform the face of nature, turn living beings into stone, change himself in an instant to a feather, a baby, or anything for the furtherance of his purposes.

And yet, while he is represented with having such strange and supernatural powers, he often found himself outwitted and circumvented by some small and insignificant animal and some of the tales place him as the most ludicrous of predicaments or having him doing the most absurd things. While he was sending salmon, trout and roots to the Indians he was forced to be hungry and naked himself.

He is represented as being very keen and cunning, full of tricks and stratagems, which, rail or unfair, he resorted to for the accomplishment of his purposes. He was interested in games and amusements, he favored dances, ordained laws, introduced industrial pursuits, taught the Indians how to cook and many other useful arts, enjoyed a trick of joke, and frequently suffered because of ignorance or folly.

In short, Coyote was a god having many of the qualities of a real coyote and of a real Indian, being a product of the Indian mind, it was but natural that he should be given some of the most pronounced characteristics of the Indian himself. Therefore, he was cunning, employed trickery and deceit, was ignorant yet

crafty, wise in some respects but full of folly and childish in others. Upon the whole he was a good god as viewed by the Indians and must have represented to a great extent their ideal.

A most singular myth connected with Coyote was that he had three sisters who lived in his abdomen. These sisters were in the form of berries that grew in the mountains. They were very wise and were their brother's chief advisers. Whenever he was unable to accomplish his designs or was in doubt as to how to proceed, he consulted them. They were represented as always being unwilling to give the desired information, because Coyote invariably took full credit for himself for all their suggestions, telling them that their ideas were just the ones he himself had. He always secured their advice in the end through threats of wailing rain upon them.

Speelyai's Wonderful Dog.

Coyote was nearly always equal to any emergency and was generally able to accomplish his purposes without assistance. As an illustration of his magic the story of the dog he created out of mud is interesting.

In those very ancient days, Coyote was traveling through the country now called Oregon and one day encountered a man who had a powerful, one-horned dog. This dog was cross and fierce and its owner had some difficulty in restraining it from attacking the god. This did not please Coyote and he taxed his ingenuity to devise a plan for ridding the earth of such a ferocious animal.

That evening he took a little lump of soft clay and, by his magic, transformed it into a mighty two-horned dog. With his dog trotting at his side he approached the stranger and suggested a dog fight to see which of the animals was the better. The stranger demurred, liking not the appearance of the two-horned dog.

"Well, then," said Coyote, "let us send our dogs out and see which can tear down yonder cliff."

To this the man assented and set his dog to work. The one-horned animal tore up a few rocks and then quit. Speelyai's dog went out and reduced the cliff to a level in a few moments. Thereupon, Coyote offered to trade dogs. The stranger was unwilling and Coyote again proposed a fight but the other would not consent.

Thereupon, Coyote challenged him to a digging contest. The stranger's dog dug a small hole in the ground and then returned. The god's two-horned brute tore great rents in the earth. A second offer for a trade was accepted and Coyote, leading the one-horned dog, went away.

The stranger was much elated and amused himself by sending his newly acquired animal to tear down mountains. Four times he sent him out with satisfactory results but the fifth time saw the end of the dog. The man sent him to tear down a great stone wall. The animal lunged at the wall and disappeared. The man investigated and found only a lump of wet clay sticking on the rocky precipice. Thus did Coyote rid the country of a snarling enemy of the people. What became of the other dog is never told.

Another interesting legend tells how Coyote destroyed the power of a great water god. This god, known to many Indian gods of the magic Water-tosh age, was a female. She lived beneath a whirlpool of the Columbia river above the present site of Tualuma where the Indians were wont to fish for salmon. She was described as a fearful monster with long, reddish-brown hair.

As their canoes passed over her, she caused the water to swirl and suck canoe and occupants into her yawning maw. Many people had thus perished and the Indians scarcely dared to fish at all.

Coyote pitied the poor Indians and meditated upon plans for ridding the river of this terror. He thought a long time but could devise no measures that promised success. Finally he consulted his sisters, and they advised him to change himself into a feather and float over the abode of the monster.

This he did. The monster, seeing the feather, caused the waters to swirl and she quickly swallowed it. She immediately vomited it up. Coyote floated down again, was swallowed and again cast up like a Jonah. This was repeated until the fifth time when the feather was retained in the stomach of the water monster.

Coyote now transformed himself into a strong Indian warrior, armed with knives and fire rods. It being extremely cold and dark in the month of October for fuel for a fire. Finding some fine, soft substance he twisted his fire rods and struck a blaze. On trying to ignite the substance he found it shivered up and would not blaze. It was the hair of a human being.

Feeling alone again he found the parts of an old canoe which he used as fuel for a warm, bright fire. On his stomach, Coyote began to cast

looking around he saw many people, stupefied with cold, canoes, fishing tackle and many other things that had been engulfed in the fatal vortex. Whalama, the eagle, was there, cold and bedraggled, a sorry spectacle for the god of the air. Coyote told all the people to gather at the fire and warm themselves. To the eagle he said, "I want you, when I tell you, to take this canoe in your beak and fly away to a high mountain and rescue these people."

Coyote looked up and saw the great heart of the monster beating and throbbing against her ribs. He had along five stone knives. He took one and sawed away at the heart strings, but the knife broke. He then tried another and it broke. He made a little progress with each one and all the time the monster was growing weaker. Just as the last knife broke the monster died.

Whalama seized the canoe in his beak, flew out of the monster's stomach, and bore the people to a high mountain. Coyote rushed out after the eagle and, reaching the shore, pronounced a curse upon the despoiled river goddess. "Your career as a destroyer is ended," he said. "You can never swallow up and kill so many people again. You may remain and frighten people and occasionally swallow a man from a strange tribe. A better race of people to come and you shall not destroy it."

the beaver women at the mouth of the Columbia who were preventing the salmon from running up the river and of how he battled with body and wit against many other enemies of the Indians.

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## Thirty-Eight Years Ago Today

(From the Weekly East Oregonian, Saturday, Sept. 21, 1878.)

Umatilla County Directory: County Judge, H. G. Yoakum; commissioners, Benjamin Walden, J. B. Benson, state senator, S. M. Pennington; representatives, J. R. White, Lucian Evans, sheriff, J. L. Sperry, clerk, J. B. Keener; treasurer, G. W. Weid; school superintendent, J. C. Arnold; coroner, Dr. J. B. Lindsay; assessor, James Cottrill; justice of the peace, Pendleton, G. W. Halsey; surveyor, J. H. Halsey.

Umatilla, the Indian trader, was in town Thursday.

Lot Livermore intends to resign his position as postmaster.

John Halsey has found a new way and better place on top of the mountain on the beachhead road that has heretofore been discovered. He now has a force of hands working on it and will have it completed in a short time. As a usual Agent Livermore objected to having the road laid out and worked but this time he struck a man who generally takes his own way. Bully for Halsey, we say.

J. B. Slater is elected senator. We hear it just as we go to press. Hurrah for our side!

We have heard of wells, hot springs and the like being struck, but our confidence and ardency centered up to the person who stole Lot Livermore's reason bed.

Born to the wife of J. N. Bunch on September 12 a daughter. Weight seven pounds. John is very proud of his girl and his only regret is that it will not be allowed to vote for Grant at the next election.

Large lots of grain is being hauled to the railroad in Pendleton.

Carpenters seem to be in great demand at Weston.

Steve of the Rambo Room is a kind of good samaritan after all. Loaned a nice little stove to Captain

Miles to warm his tent till the captain's outfit arrives, his supplies being now en route.

A pleasant dancing party met at Millard's hall last week. Splendid music for the occasion and the ladies were all dressed as shown by an account in the Bedrock Democrat, that is to say they all wore clothes. Happy time until the wee small hours.

It is reported on the street this morning that Peo, son of We-num-shoot, was killed between town and the agency last Thursday.

What Bill Switzer is trying to get rid of all his effects at cost, has brother John and wife conspired to increase their stock of goods in the shape of an eight and a half pound boy baby.

Captain Miles, the man who fought the good fight on the 12th of July and succeeded in ridding Snake and Hannocks out of our country is stationed on the reserve a mile out from town where he will erect suitable quarters for himself and men. We understand he has about 100 soldiers in his command. We suppose his main work will consist in looking after the friendly hostiles who reside on the reservation.

John Hradburn has again been hunting stock in Pendleton. He had the luck to find where certain cows and calves had gone during the summer outside of what the Indians guarded. Parties interested had better not be up or there will be trouble.

Dave Taylor keeps in jail six Indians and one white man. Dave is a good provider.

Thomas Gurney, an old citizen of this county, but for the last few years a resident of Grant county, where he had been clerk, miner and merchant, was fatally stabbed a short time ago by a boy 19 years of age whose name was Keys.

Potatoes are selling by the load in our town at two cents per pound.

# Why Buy More Cylinders to Get Hupmobile Performance?

This Four-Cylinder Car is Daily Furnishing Proof of Greater High-Gear Ability than is Found in Sixes, Eights, or Twelves

A good many four-cylinder Hupmobiles are being sold to people who once thought they preferred a six, an eight, or even a twelve.

We say they once thought they preferred one of the other types.

Because one demonstration of Hupmobile performance usually rids people of that idea.

How could it be otherwise, when they see the four-cylinder Hupmobile do all that any multi-cylinder car does—and with greater ease, as often as not?

### Hupmobile Shows Four Cylinders Enough

They see the Hupmobile take hills on high, and go through sand and mud on high, when cars with more cylinders have failed to do the same.

That is why the Hupmobile everywhere is winning preference over multi-cylinder cars.

It is showing that with Hupmobile construction, more than four cylinders are unnecessary to get every essential of performance.

It is demonstrating not only remarkable hill-climbing and mud-plugging ability; but it is showing fast high-gear pick-up, quick get away, and amazing flexibility, in the cities.

### Abundant Proof of Performance

And the proof of this extraordinary performance is not lacking.

It abounds in all parts of the country.

It will be furnished here—gladly—any time, and anywhere; in comparative demonstration, if you like.

For example, not a multi-cylinder car in Boston will enter into a competitive demonstration with the Hupmobile on Corey Hill.

The reason is that on the hardest grade of this double hill, the Hupmobile goes from a standing start to 35 miles an hour at the top—all the way on high gear.

In New York the manufacturer of a famous six has given so much publicity to a certain hill that has become known as His Hill.

Yet the Hupmobile beats the performance of that six on that hill.

### High Gear Work in Colorado

Coming closer home, the Hupmobile makes the entire distance from Denver to Idaho Springs

—over the famous Lookout Mountain—on high gear, and without overheating.

On Hospital Hill in Kansas City; on the Des Moines hill of the same name; on Coon Hollow hill, a part of the famous Pasadena-Altadena climb out of Los Angeles—in every part of the country where the going is hard and most cars fail—the Hupmobile stands supreme in performance.

### You Can Have Proof Here and Now

You can see for yourself just

what Hupmobile four-cylinder performance is, any time you like.

We are ready to demonstrate the car whenever you say the word; and we suggest that you do so during the coming week.

Then you will understand why Hupmobile owners see nothing to envy in the performance of other types.

If you wish a comparative demonstration, choose the other car or cars. You will find the Hupmobile ready for any difficult performance you may suggest.

The Mark of Superior Motor Car Service



### Five Hupmobile Points to Remember

**PERFORMANCE**—A high gear performer in the usual low-gear situations.

**COUPON SERVICE**—Regularly each month for eight months free labor, inspections and adjustments, at more than 5000 authorized Hupmobile service stations in the United States and Canada.

**ECONOMY**—In line with the well-known Hupmobile repair cost record of 1/4 cent per mile. This is

real economy—maintenance economy. Car is easy on tires, fuel and lubricant.

**EFFICIENCY**—Eleven thousand owners report the Hupmobile 99 per cent efficient.

**REPEAT SALES**—Fifty and eight-tenths per cent of the Hupmobile output is sold to Hupmobile owners, because they are completely satisfied with Hupmobile Performance, Service, Economy and Efficiency.

5-Pass. Touring Car \$1185 Roadster \$1185 7-Pass. Touring Car \$1340  
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