

The Peaks of Central Oregon

Evaline Patt came across this story in the book Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, by Ella E. Clark. She would like to share the story here:

The Oregon sky line for many miles both east and west of the Cascade Range is dominated by a series of peaks. The following stories and traditions about some of them were recalled by Lucy and Walter Miller, Warm Springs Indians, who had heard them in childhood from their grandfathers, signers of the Treaty of 1855:

The group of peaks called the Three Sisters is a prominent landscape feature in Central Oregon. Each peak is more than 10,000 feet in altitude.

The mountains were once people, our grandfathers used to tell us. Mount Adams, north of the Columbia, and Mount Hood, south of it, became jealous of each other because of some girl. So they started quarreling and fighting.

At that time there was a bridge across the river, and the two rivals would cross it to fight. Sometimes they fought on one side of the Columbia, sometimes on the other. Coyote tried to stop their quarreling, but they would not stop.

So all the other mountain peaks agreed to help him. From away down in the Klamath Marsh country they marched north for a big coun-

cil meeting. They planned to cross the Columbia on the bridge and have the meeting north of the river. The Three Sisters marched with the mountain people, and so did Black Butte and her husband.

Black Butte carried on her back a big bag of roots and berries, for food along the way.

Her husband carried a deer over his shoulder, so that they would have meat on their journey. One day the sun was so hot and the bag was so heavy that Black Butte sat down to rest. Her husband was annoyed and lay down, pouting. Black Butte was very tired. She was so warm that sweat ran

down her face and sides in streams.

Those creeks came together below her and formed the Metolius River.

But Coyote did not wait for the help of the mountain people, Mount Adams and Mount Hood were going to have a wrestling match, and Coyote knew that it would turn into a fight. So he made up his mind to keep the two men apart. He wished the bridge to fall, and the bridge fell. Mount Adams could not cross over.

When the mountain people heard that Coyote had broken down the bridge, they stopped marching.

(Legend will conclude in the next Spilyay Tymoo)



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