

## TRADITIONS OF THE HOH AND QUILLAYUTE INDIANS\*

### *How a Quillayute Chief Got a Clallam Wife*

Long, long ago when our people were a strong race, they had trouble with the Clallam Indians. Time and again they went to the long water that extends eastward from the big water towards the setting sun to fight these Indians; and, though they were strong, our people usually defeated them, the battles usually being fought at Pyscht.

Finally the old chief at Pyscht sent word that he would give his daughter in marriage to our chief if he would stop the hostile acts; and as our chief had often seen the woman and knew that she was a good looking Indian lady and above all things a good worker, he accepted the proposition. He then set about to make preparations to go and get her.

For weeks there was dancing and medicine ceremonies of preparation. Then a hundred canoes set out to round the cape to the Clallam country. Moreover, on arriving at Ozette they went ashore and took an Ozette Indian along with them to act as a guide and as interpreter should one be needed, also taking his canoe with them.

Reaching Neah Bay, the hundred crews all turned their canoes around as is customary and made preparation to land; but the Makahs came down to the shore and forbade the landing, as they were afraid of our people. Then as they had not gone to fight the Neah Bays they did not force a landing, but paddled out into the Strait and proceeded on their journey. They, however, then began to make preparation as if expecting battle.

Each man girded on his tough elk hide war blanket or coat and war bonnet. Then as the wind wafted them onward they practiced with bow, spear, knife, and club to get themselves in perfect trim for action. They also greased their bodies with whale oil, daubed their faces with paint and bedecked themselves with feathers of the wats-tsa-wot-tsa duck.

Arriving opposite Pyscht, they again approached the shore, clad and formed in battle array so that the people of the place thought

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that they were out on another war expedition and that they were the victims. They, however, were only acting that way for the fun of it.

Then after the Pyscht Indians had all fled from the place, the Quillayutes returned to the Strait again in single file, one canoe behind another, and paddled and sailed eastward with favorable winds to a spot near where the Elwa river joins the Strait of Juan de Fuca where they went ashore, prepared meals, and stayed all night.

At an early hour the next morning when the morning star had just showed itself above the mountains toward the rising of the sun, they broke camp and started to the Clallam headquarters where the chief lived who had promised the giving of the young woman to our chief for a wife, the camp being in the edge of the timber on the beach where the city of Port Angeles is now situated. They left the coast in their canoes in Indian file, but after they had gone a short distance they formed in a line abreast. Then as they journeyed along over the smooth calm sea, the chief made them all a speech, telling them to be on the lookout, that everyone should be on his guard, as the Clallams might be trying to trick them.

On they paddled. The warriors again attired themselves in their war regalia. They exercised themselves to see if they were in good trim for action. They threw their axes and war clubs up into the air and caught them. They wrestled with each other. They brandished their knives and spears. They yelled and shrieked till the hills beyond the water gave back the sound. On they paddled.

Rounding the point of land at Port Angeles they came in full sight of the Clallam camp where their approach had already been detected, as the village was all astir and the people were running hither and thither. As the boats approached the shore and made preparation to land, they were also seen to separate at the far front and form in two divisions with an open space in front of the intended landing place.

At this juncture, a Clallam came to the shore and told the approaching party not to land just yet. So they rested on their paddles, awaiting further moves.

While they were thus resting and going through war maneuvers, a Clallam warrior, Tsop-wilth-was-the by name, came out of a large smokehouse into an open space directly in front of their canoes some distance from shore and performed; the Ozette Indian who was with the Quillayutes knew this Indian and called him by name. He exercised himself good to show that they, too, were prepared for battle, if needs be. After he had exercised himself and displayed

his skill in the open, he went back to the smokehouse; and another Indian whom the Ozette man also knew, came out clad in war attire and performed up and down the beach in the open space and likewise displayed his skill before them. Then after he had tossed his war club up and caught it and practiced good, he went back to the smokehouse; and a third warrior came out and performed as the other two had done. Then when he had showed that he was the strong man and had extensively and picturesquely displayed his skill, he likewise returned to the smokehouse.

Then two medicine men, whom the Ozette man also knew, one of whose name was Kwiskwastid, the other Ilthladda, came out of the smokehouse with clam shell medicine rattles and climbed upon the flat roof; you know our houses all had flat rooves then. They then went through various, various ceremonies, seeming to call upon their deities to help them, should our people attack the village. Then when they had finished they, too, went back into the smokehouse.

The head chief then came out of the house and approached the landing where the canoes were, after which he invited the visitors to land. So they went ashore.

The Clallams, however, did not allow them to go to their houses, nor allow them the freedom of the village, because they were afraid. Instead, they spread mats on the ground in the open for them to sit on. They then brought them cooked horse clams to eat, which had been cooked the favorite style of the time, having been taken from the shells and then stuck on a sharpened stick one above another and roasted before the fire.

When the meal had been eaten, the bride-to-be was brought out of the smokehouse completely obscured from view with cedar bark blankets and mats. Then a group of warriors took her and presented her to the chief, thus clad. They then advised the visitors to leave their village at once, as they were evidently afraid of them. So they immediately left the place and journeyed homeward.

Arriving at Akolot (James Island) the canoes all came ashore in Indian file, as the medicine men and women lined up on the shore to meet them. Then when all had landed, the bride, still wrapped up and obscured from view as was the custom in those days, was walked up and down the beach and through each street of the village, then to the house of her spouse, as the medicine men performed incantations, the populace sang and danced the marriage dance, and the warriors danced the war dance on the beach. This performance,

with brief intervals of feasting, was kept up for four days and five nights. The Clallam woman was then the wife of the Quillayute chief.

After that there was never any more trouble with the Clallam Indians.

*The Battle of Pekillum on the West Coast of Vancouver Island*

A long time ago one hundred Quillayute canoes were out whaling and another hundred went on a plundering expedition to the island you people now call Vancouver.

It was late in the day when the latter arrived at Vancouver Island. They stopped and had landed when they heard other Indians just over a hill a little farther up the beach. So as a precaution against being seen, they did not start a fire. As a precaution they also divided their force, keeping a part of the men in the canoes ready to pull from shore at a moment's notice, if attacked. The other party crawled through the brush and timber up around and over the hill till they could see the camp of the enemy where they discovered there were lots of Indians.

They, too, were warriors out on a marauding expedition of some sort. They were feasting and having a good time and did not suspect that there was an enemy in the whole country. They indeed felt so safe that they did not even have a guard.

Our spies returned to our boats and reported what they had seen. Then hiding the canoes where they could easily be manned if necessity demanded, they all concealed themselves in the brush and woods and waited the coming of night and darkness to fall upon the enemy.

Night came with a full moon. The Quillayutes crawled through the brush noiselessly to the vicinity of the enemy's camping place. Then they waited there for the unsuspecting to go to sleep for the night; but the latter were busy playing games and it was nearly morning when they retired. Then feeling perfectly safe, they lay down wherever they were and were soon all asleep, some on the sand, some on mats and reeds, and others in their canoes.

The decisive moment had come. With war clubs of whale bone and stone and with daggers of yew wood the Quillayutes fell upon the sleeping victims who became panic stricken. Here they slugged a man with their war club. There they killed one with a dagger. Over half of them were killed before they could rise to their feet. Some of the others fled to the woods. Others defended themselves with their bows and arrows. And others tried to escape in their

canoes; but our men had taken possession of the canoes and escape that way was, consequently, cut off. Practically all were either killed, or captured to be made slaves.

Some of our men had been shot with arrows, but few of them had been much injured. They were protected by rawhide clothes so that the arrows did not harm them and to protect their necks they also held the top of the rawhide collar in their mouths.

After the battle they cut off the heads of the dead and after putting them and the captives in their canoes, they paddled for home.

On reaching Neah Bay they placed a board-shake at the front of each canoe, on which were certain symbolic designs,—a board which when thus erected at the front of a boat in those days was a declaration of war. So the Makahs came out in force when they saw this sign and would not let them land.

They next went to Ozette and did the same as at Neah Bay; and a landing was again denied them. They then sailed for home.

On arriving at their home at Akolot (James Island) a great feast was proclaimed, which lasted several days. At its close several of the captives were burned and some were buried alive beneath totem posts. The heads of the dead that were brought back from the expedition were also then thrown into the cave—burial place near James Island and on them each passer-by threw a stone as often as he passed.

#### *Another Conflict With the Makahs.*

Once a man, who in reality was Chief Wetswood of our tribe, claimed that he was a girl and attired himself in women's clothes. He then went to where the head men were fighting the Makahs. Then as he wished to marry the head man of the enemy, he stole over to his camp one dark night.

The chief was very glad that "she" had come and at once proposed to marry her; whereupon she told him that she loved him and was willing to marry him at any time. So the marriage ceremony was immediately performed, after which the chief took her to his house.

Lots of families then lived in one house, and the chief's house was no exception. So late that night after a great feast and "pot-latch," everybody went to bed, the husbands and wives sleeping feet to feet the old fashioned way. All were then soon fast asleep, except the newly married "woman," who had come there to kill the

war chief, pretending to be a woman as his only chance to get near him.

All slept very, very soundly except one very old man who awoke a little after midnight. Toward daylight the man-girl touched her husband to see if he was "sure" asleep, which he was. So "she" got her mussel shell knife which "she" had concealed in her clothing, and cut his throat with it, totally severing the head from the body, after which she carried it outside the house.

The old man who had awakened in the night said in the morning that he knew the day before it was Wetswood and not his sister who looked just like him even to having a mole on her face in the same place that he had one that had come to the village to marry the head man. He also said that he heard a noise, a groan, when Wetswood cut the chief's throat.

As soon as daylight came, they tracked Wetswood along the beach, but as he was the swiftest runner of the whole tribe, he outran all the Makahs; and when the Quillayute people saw him coming, he was singing over and over again: "I am a better runner than a wolf," which he kept singing till he got to James Island, our stronghold.

He then presented the head of the Makah chief to the tribe, and from that on he was the head chief of our people, often defeating the Makahs in battle.

#### *The Battle of Chinook*

A long time ago our people had a slave from Grays Harbor, as the white man now calls that place; and after he had been with them a long time and had become trustworthy, they took him on an expedition to his native country, because he knew the region. Then when they arrived just this side of the mouth of the Columbia river about where they had intended to go, they stopped as the homes of the Chinook people were before them.

It was night and the people were feasting and dancing, not knowing that there was an enemy in the land. In a short time they then all lay down and were soon fast asleep.

The slave had gone over to his people and had been feasting with them; but, as he talked their language and they were all busily engaged in their ceremonies, they did not notice that he was a stranger. Then after they were all asleep, he came back to his master, the Quillayute, and told him that the "sleepy time" was upon the land over there and that sleep was holding everyone tightly.

A few of our men had been left to watch the canoes, but the tide had receded and left them and their canoes on dry land far away from the surf. The rest, up at once, fell upon the sleeping people and killed half of them with old fashioned war clubs before the alarm was spread that an enemy was there.

The Chinook people rallied and chased our people who tried to flee in their canoes, but could not get them to the water's edge. Consequently many of them were killed.

One Quillayute got cut off from the rest of his fellows. The Chinook braves pursued him and overtook him on the muddy beach. They beat him down into the mud with their war clubs in their effort to kill him. They pounded him till he was covered all over and beaten down out of sight in the slush.

The tide commenced to come in and the Quillayutes in charge of the boats shoved them out into the forward moving waves and went down to the river where the battle had been. When they got down there there was only one Quillayute alive. He was the brave who had been beaten down into the mud. He had extricated himself and was practically unhurt, except that he had caught a terrible cold.

He called to the men in the boats, "Are you friends? If you are, get me."

The canoemen then returned to Quillayute with their empty canoes, for our people had lost all. And never did they make a raid to the south country.

#### *The Battle of Forks Prairie*

In the long ago two of our young, unmarried girls went to the prairie to gather fern roots to dry and make into flour. All day they dug the roots which were often several fathoms in length. They pulled and pulled them from beneath the black soil and laid them in long windrow piles on the ground. Then towards evening they went to cutting them into sections and tying them in bundles.

As they were thus busying themselves, they noticed dark objects entering the prairie from its various sides. They furthermore noticed that they were Indians from some other tribe and that they fell flat to the ground when they saw them at work in the fern root patch. Evidently, they were enemies and did not wish to be seen, having come there for no good purpose.

To show the new-comers that they knew they were there, would likely mean their immediate capture and death. So, though very

much scared, they stoically worked on, for as yet they had a chance to escape as there was no enemy between them and their homē. Moreover, they could possibly save their kinsman if they could only get to them by strategem. On they worked. They tied up all the bundles of fern roots, swung their baskets at their backs, and taking the bundles by each end, they lifted them over their heads and threw them into the baskets. Then when the baskets were filled till no more could be piled on them. They set out for their homes as they bent under their heavy loads. Then as though nothing unusual was at hand, they leisurely walked homeward, even singing Indian love songs as they went.

Stoically they walked to the long house in which our people lived. Then on getting inside the building where their actions could not be seen from without, they threw down their baskets and told the people in the picture-motion style of the Indians what they had seen; that enemies were there, that there were lots of them, and that they could see them hiding among the fern bushes in every part of the prairie.

Indians were not then at peace with each other as now; and one tribe in another's territory always meant trouble. So our people immediately made ready for battle, for they knew it would come under cover of the darkness that was then setting in.

They tied all the dogs' mouths shut so they could not bark and then tied them securely in the house. Some of them made port holes in the walls from which they could shoot. Some removed planks at regular intervals on the long-angled, sloping roof. Others prepared pitch knots for torches. Then when all was ready, no fires or lights being left in the long house, they waited the coming of the men from without.

Soon two dark objects were noticed creeping across the open space that surrounded the building. Closer and closer they came, as those within breathlessly waited with bow in hand and arrow in place. Closer and closer these spies came. They got down on all fours and crawled for a short distance. Then they stood up to look about to see what those within were doing; but all there was still as though sleeping. Then "twang" went the bow strings. One Indian fell forward dead. The other staggered, reeled, groaned, tried to shout, then fell heavily backwards to the ground, also dead, both having been shot through the heart.

Soon other strangers were seen creeping across the open space.



Then "twang" went the bow strings in the hands of those within the house, and those in the yard passed to the land of the shades.

For hours this sort of fighting was kept up. Then the strangers all attacked the house in a body under cover of the darkness. On they rushed. Out of the brush they leaped as they filled the air with their deafening warhoop. Then quick as a flash the prepared torches were lighted within the house, placed on the long poles, and thrust up through the purposely fixed open spaces in the roof. At once the open area in the immediate vicinity was as light as day, while within the house it was pitch dark. Consequently, those without could see nothing with the bright blaze shining in their faces, while those within were able to see every move of the enemy. "Twang" went the bows in the hands of our people. Down went the foremost enemies. Yet on they came. Again and again their ranks were shattered. They reached the house. They fought hand to hand with our braves. They mounted the house roof. They got inside; but they had spent their force. The squaws killed those who got in through the roof; with the war clubs the braves kept them at bay at the doors and windows, and the well aimed arrows left them in heaps in the yard.

Soon only ten enemies could be seen, and these were running away from the place. At this juncture, the dogs were unmuzzled and turned loose. In hot pursuit they went, their howling and bay-ing filling all the woods. One by one they ran the fleeing enemy down. At daylight not one of them was left alive.

#### *The Battle of Chimakum*

We were once a powerful people and had possession of the Quillayute and Hoh rivers and all the rivers that flow into them. Our women also gathered fern roots from all the prairies of the region. Not only that but our possessions extended over the Clallam mountains to the north to the long water that goes out to meet the big water towards the setting sun. Moreover, along that water our possessions stretched from the mouth of the Hoko river to Chimakum, a distance of a three long days' canoe journey.

Peaceably we lived in all this region and a happy people were we. The salmon came early in the year at Quillayute, and we could always dig clams in abundance on the long water. There were also plenty of game in the woods and water birds in the rivers. We were happy, but an evil day came.

A certain woman, called Natankabostub, became a witch. With

the glance of her evil eye she killed people. From place to place she went doing harm. She would keep the fish from "running" in the streams. She would keep the hunters from killing the game in the woods. And when the people would go out whaling, she would cause the whales to destroy the boats and drown the whalers.

This evil "tomanawis" woman made our people afraid all the time. She caused them to see visions of dead people and then they would die; you know people always die when they see dead people in their dreams. In one week many people died. Consequently, something had to be done.

A meeting of all the Quillayutes was called at Chimakum, and most all of our people went to it. A pow-wow was held by the head men of the tribe, and the woman was tried as a witch.

At this trial the principal medicine man arose and advanced to the center of the room. He then slowly raised his hands as a breathless silence took possession of the sitting. Again he waved his hands. Then he began a passionate harrangue:

"My brothers," he began, "that woman, the owl, has evil tomanawis. She has communication with the evil ones. I have seen her communicating with them."

"That's so. We have seen her also," interrupted many voices in several parts of the room.

He continued in a little higher keyed voice as a sinister smile swept across his face, "Five years ago she caused it to be stormy weather throughout the halibut season. Again she spoiled the elk hunts by her tomanawis chasing all the game out of the country."

"I vouch for that," shouted another medicine man near the entrance to the great hall. "I saw her tomanawis, a lizzard with immense horns, chasing the game to the land of the blue ice and the home of the thunderbird."

"Again I say," shouted the first speaker, "I say she has influence over others by her bad tomanawis. She causes her enemies to lose all the games. She was the cause of the poor whaling season last year, too. She danced backwards in the whale dance. I saw her dance so. She has owl feathers in her house. I have also seen them. I have also doctored the sick with her. With my tomanawis I have seen her take the soul out of the patient's body and in a hand-clasped, tomanawis grip, carry it in spirit to yonder rock by the needle-point amid the boiling surf and imprison it there. And, helpless, I was compelled to sit by and see her tomanawis spirit laugh and grin a sickening grin, as she tormented the spirit like a cougar torments

a squirrel before it devours it. Then I have seen her black tomanwis spirit send the pleading soul to the darkest spot in the land of the dead. She is the death doctor of our tribe. Indeed, she holds the destiny of our tribe in her hands. She is an evil tomanawis woman, a woman of the black art. May the Mother Earth do unto her as she deserves. May Kwatte take her spirit to the lowest, darkest shades."

The effect was what he desired. The big talk and the big noise had won, and she was condemned to be burned, to be burned as a black-tomanawis witch, as an evil-spirit doctor. Immediately she was fettered and tied to a tree. Then all slunk from her to make the final preparations for the tragic act, for the devil's dance, and potlatch.

The women gathered clams and roasted them in a pit. The young men went to the woods and killed loads of game. The other people collected together baskets, boats and other things at hand to be given away and destroyed as an offering to the deities.

At dusk all was in readiness. Black faced, the men rushed from the woods to the open space around the tree where the doomed woman was tied. Great piles of wood were piled around her, as she called up curses upon them from the shades. The fiendish-like dance was begun. A cub bear was torn to pieces with the teeth of the dancers while it was yet alive. The great fire was ignited. The presents were exchanged and then immediately destroyed in the presence of the gods. With a howling shriek they next tore the woman to pieces as they had the bear. Then the fire was left to consume all.

While they were thus dancing, a storm had arisen and the thunder-bird at this juncture began to flap his wings and open and shut his eyes in the heavens; and the lightening snakes also sallied forth from beneath that warring bird's breast. Instantly the woman's shadow (spirit) filled all the woods with whoops, and quicker than it takes the thunderbird to flap his wings, hundreds and hundreds of painted warriors from the abode of the dead fell upon our helpless people. Onward with a blood-curdling yell came the evil spirits. Before them there was no mercy. All of the assembled Quillayute-Chimakum tribe then and there perished, and the demons (the Clallam Indians) held the land.

"Oh, Mr. White man, that was an evil day for us, and that witch woman was the cause of it all. In that one night the power of our tribe was broken, only a few escaping the horrible massacre. The

small village of Chimakum, near where Port Townsend is now situated, and the small villages of Hoh and Quillayute were all that was left to us; and since then we have been too small in numbers to control a large territory."

ALBERT B. REAGAN.