

INDIAN NOTES  
AND MONOGRAPHS

EDITED BY F. W. HODGE



A SERIES OF PUBLICA-  
TIONS RELATING TO THE  
AMERICAN ABORIGINES

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HOW THE MAKAH OBTAINED  
POSSESSION OF CAPE  
FLATTERY

TOLD BY

ALBERT IRVINE

TRANSLATED BY

LUKE MARKISTUN

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NEW YORK

MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN  
HEYE FOUNDATION

1921

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 HIS Neah bay was owned by the Nitinat, together with Tatoosh island. There was a man who went out from this village here, out on the road leading south from the village, and on the trail he met a man who lived out in the woods, a wild man. One of his feet was bigger than the other, one big and one small, of this man. When he got up to the wild man he lost all his senses, also his breath. When this man came to, he became the strongest man in the village.

At this time the Makahs heard about this man that got the strength (the Makahs were from Waatcht, Sooes, and Ozette), so they came over here to have a hair-pulling contest. One of the Makahs challenged the man that had the strength, but he refused: he wanted to try with one of the slaves. So the Nitinat let him and the Makah (slave) come out; he belonged to one of the chieftains of the Makahs. So they had the hair-pulling contest and in the contest the Makah got his neck [head] twisted right off, which killed him.

After this time, five girls went across from Ozette village to Ozette island. They were going out picking licorice-roots, and when they were going home from the island, a storm came up and these girls drifted on to Tatoosh island and there became slaves to the Nitinats. Then the Makah tribe found out that they were drifted to Tatoosh island and asked to buy these girls from them; they bought back four, missing one.

Then they had council together and



said: "It is enough, what the Nitinats have done to us! They have twisted off the head of one of us and made slaves of our girls. Let us make war with them!" So they made war with these Nitinats. They made their first attack at Tatoosh island; they fought without any firearms, no powder. They had bows and arrows, also spears. So they were standing close to each other during this fight. There was great slaughter on both sides. When they got back home, that is, the Ozettes, they left two canoes on guard; if the Nitinats would attack them, they had these canoes day after day on guard. If any of the canoes should go from Tatoosh to Ozette they were going to have these canoes go out and slaughter them. These Nitinats moved away from the island on account of being killed off so easily on that Tatoosh island, therefore they moved to the mainland, where they call Deah, where a person may see these shells and clam-beds around here, that was from the time when the Nitinats were here.

Now this gave a chance for the Ozettes, Sooes, and Waatcht people to get together and come over and attack these Nitinats. They fought on this ground. The Makahs had a council over these war affairs, and said, "We'll never give up fighting for the place!" They were going to fight till they drove the Nitinats out of the place. The Nitinats found out that they were losing, so they tried to make peace. They asked the chief of the Makahs' daughter to marry their chief, so they wouldn't fight any more.

There were a brother and a sister among these Ozettes. They had noses, ears, and hair just alike. After they had this council, it was suggested that this young man should go in the place of his sister. This man's name was Wutswud. Now, he left word that he would be gone four days; it was this man that went as a young girl. When this young man's father brought him over to the Nitinats, Wutswud got a knife and cut himself in the groin, and when he got together with the man that he married, he reached

down where he had cut himself and showed his bloody hand to the husband and told him not to sleep with him for that reason.

Now, after the three days, on the fourth day he wanted him close alongside of him and hugged him pretty close. During the night he [Wutswud] felt around for the husband to find out whether he was asleep. When he found he was sound asleep, he went for the door to open it, then he came back. He got hold of this Nitinat who was next to the chief and cut his throat. He took the head off and carried it along with him. This Nitinat chief's name was Watl-wiekoos.

On the fourth day they were on the lookout for this man to make his appearance. Truly enough, he appeared and showed that he had the head, which he showed by making a zigzag on the beach. This was a signal for the Ozette Indians. So the Nitinats moved to Tatoosh again, and had only one chief this time. So the Makahs got together and made an

attack on the Nitinats which were on Tatoosh island, slaughtering a good many, but they did not get the chief. The Ozettes went back home, and during the night the Sooes came up toward the cape and hid themselves in the coves there for that day. They saw a canoe out between Kitidit [Duncan rock] and Tatoosh island, and in it was the chief of the Nitinats. So they paddled off from their hiding place to capture this man who was out fishing. They had paddled quite a way out before the folks on Tatoosh island discovered that there were war-canoes coming, so they called out and gave the warning from the island to the man who was out fishing, shouting, "Here come the war-canoes!" They called out like that two or three times, so the man out fishing paddled for the island and met them just as they were close to the cape as you go into the landing place. The man that was out fishing jumped from the canoe to the shore; while he was going up the rocks, they threw a spear at him. He was hit, not

through his body, but through his blanket that he wore, and they pulled him down from there and killed him. This chief's name was Kitlcheduk.

Their chiefs were killed, and they stayed two days packing up. They did not move across at first when they moved out of here; they moved up the sound [east].

The Makahs captured at this time what they have here, and became sole owners of the place. They became owners of Neah bay and Tatoosh island.

Now our title to this ground and the reason I am here now is because we have shed blood here. That is our title to these grounds.

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