

Gray's *Dan-mologol* or *Medicine Rock*

Overview Hugo, Oregon like most places has its Native American history, some known, most not. Hugo's first citizens or peoples were the Lowland Takelma Indians of the Rogue River Valley.

*The Takelmas and Their Athapascan Neighbors*¹ **Supernatural Beings.**



Salmon

For the Takelma, the forces of nature and the fate of humans were determined by numerous supernatural spirits. Many of these supernaturals were associated with organic elements such as plants and animals, which were believed to be the transformed

manifestations of primeval earthy inhabitants. Some physical forces of nature, for example thunder and lightning, were believed to be caused by the actions of the organic supernatural spirits. Inorganic objects such as the sun, moon, or rain also were identified with their own supernatural beings (page 43).¹

Dan-mologol or Medicine Rock On a more localized level, some supernatural beings were directly associated with particular natural objects, including rocks, trees, and mountains. It was to these specific objects that offerings of food and valuables, as well as prayers, were often made. An example of the practice was noted by Sapir and Harrington in regard to **Dan-mologol or Medicine Rock**. This spirit was localized in a large rock located in Lowland Takelma territory near Sexton Mountain (Gray¹ 1987:43; Harrington² 1981:876).



Camas

Aldauvak'wadis Were Two Mountain Brother Spirits

Medicine Rock had the power to cure various kinds of illness, as well as inflict pain or death. Offerings of food (e.g., salmon or camas) were deposited on top of the **Medicine Rock** and prayers were directed to its spirit. Associated with the rock were several implements including a bucket, a stick for picking up hot rocks to use in boiling food, a stirring paddle, and a pipe. It is not clear from the accounts whether these were, in fact, the actual implements of daily life or were other spirit rocks which represented the actual tools. In either case, Sapir recorded a myth from Frances Johnson which details the use of these implements by **Dan-mologol** to inflict revenge upon an evil shaman. Other specific spirit objects mentioned by Frances Johnson include four mountain spirits, two of whom were brothers. They shared the name **Aldauvakwadis** and were subordinates to the spirit of **Dan-mologol**. **One of the mountains was located near Medicine Rock, and most likely was Sexton Mountain**; the other was near the Illinois River. **The third spirit mountain, Alsawentadis, located near Sexton Mountain, was likely Walker or Roberts Mountain.** An interesting side note concerning this spirit mountain was that Frances Johnson told Harrington that it was on this mountain that ". . . the boat rested after the world flood, they found boat there." The fourth mountain spirit recorded by Sapir, called Aldank!ol'ida, was near Jacksonville. Apparently each of these localized spirits was capable of defending the average person against the evil caused by shamans. (pages 43 - 44)

Tannaxule-tha: "**Medicine Rock**, it is like a round table." "Tannaxule-tha is the locality where the Medicine Rock was, 'where the rock sits down' . . . where the Medicine Rock is of Altawaykhaw Mountain, a trail ran past Tannaxule-tha." In the vicinity of Sexton Pass near present day Interstate 5 (page 79).¹



Altawayakhw Mountain = Sexton Mountain



Tarweed

'Altawayakhw' Mountain: Sexton Mountain "Where the Medicine Rock is." "On my way back to California from Siletz, I stop in the evening on top of Sexton Mountain at the place where the rock is with the maple growing out of it" (page 81).¹

Alsawentadis: "**Next to the first of the two mountain brothers.**" [Walker or Roberts Mountain, north of Grants Pass.] (page 81¹)

Lathpaltha': "A place this side of Medicine Rock. Between Grave Creek and Medicine Rock. From thpal, a yard high plant, eat roots like carrots" somewhere in the area north of Sexton Mountain, and south of Grave Creek (page 83).¹

Daldanik: "A village north of the Rogue River between Grants Pass and Leaf Creek; in the vicinity of dan mologol" between Grants Pass and Grave Creek, in the vicinity of Sexton Mountain (page 85).¹

Be Respectful. Always be respectful of your neighbor's property rights. With permission, leave only footprints.

Want more information? Contact a member of the HNAT.

1. Gray, Dennis J. (1987). *The Takelmas and Their Athapascan Neighbors: A New Ethnographic Synthesis for the Upper Rogue River Area of Southwestern Oregon*. University of Oregon Anthropological Papers, No. 37. Eugene: Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon.

2. Harrington, John Peabody. 1981 *The Papers of John Peabody Harrington in the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution 1907-1957*. Reel number 28. Kraus International Publications. Millwood, New York.

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission of promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and to preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, if requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Volunteer membership dues are \$10.00 annually per family and normally used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications and mailings. Send us your e-mail address if you want to know what we are doing.

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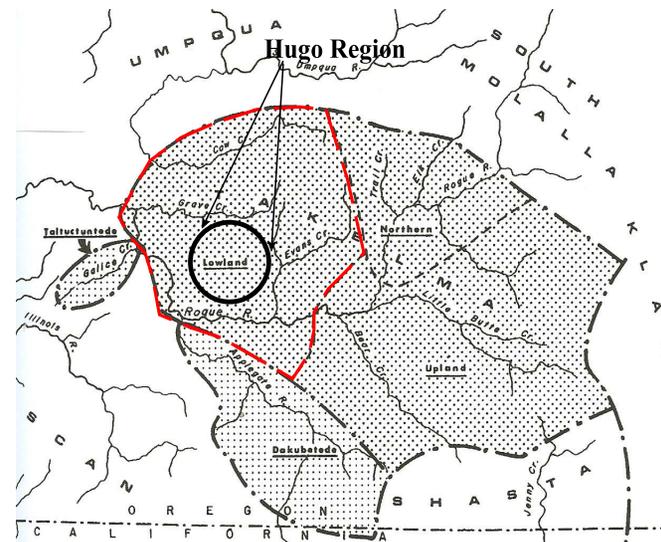
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Native American Brochure Series



Map 1. Lowland Takelma Indians¹

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Hugo Neighborhood Association &
Historical Society
Josephine County Historical Society