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## Takelma Indians

**Edward Sapir** (1884–1939) was a German-born American anthropologist-linguist and a leader in American structural linguistics. The following information on Old Rock Woman is all from Sapir's Takelma Texts.<sup>1</sup>

*Takelma Texts*<sup>1</sup> Though the Takelma language represents one of the distinct linguistic stocks of North America, the number of individuals that can be said to have anything like a fluent speaking knowledge of it is quite inconsiderable, barely more than a handful in fact. Under the circumstances it is therefore a source of congratulation that enough of the folk-lore of the Takelmas could be obtained to enable one to assign these Indians a definite place in American mythology. Of both the texts and complementary linguistic material the sole informant was Frances Johnson

 (Indian name Gwisgwashan), a full-blood Takelma woman past the prime of life. It is largely to her patience and intelligence that whatever merit this volume may be thought to have is due. The grammatical material obtained has been worked up into a somewhat detailed study now in press as part of the Handbook of American Indian Languages edited by Prof. Boas. The few items of an ethnological character that were obtained incidentally to the linguistics and mythology have been incorporated in two short articles, *Notes on the Takelma Indians of Southwestern Oregon* and *Religious Ideas of the Takelma Indians of Southwestern Oregon*.

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1. Sapir, Edward. 1909. *Takelma Texts*. Anthropological Publications, Volume 2. University of Pennsylvania.

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## Rock-Woman & A Mountain Are A medicine-Man's Bane

**The Takelma Myth Number 22** "Rock-Woman and a Mountain are a Medicine-Man's Bane" is part of *Takelma Texts* by Sapir (pages 171 - 173).<sup>1</sup>



*Salmon*

### **Rock-Woman and a Mountain are a Medicine-Man's Bane**<sup>1</sup>

When this set world was first begun, then was that told to the **Old Rock Woman**,  
"Thou, for thy part, (shalt be)

a medicine-man poisoner. If an evil-minded medicine-man devours a person, thou, for thy part, shalt sing for that," was she told. Thereupon "Yes" she said. "Then thy pipe shalt thou put in the medicine-man's mouth, thou shalt give him to smoke," was she told. Thereupon that she did to him, here being her rock bucket, and in her bucket her stirring paddle, and her tongs. Thus was it given to the **Old Rock Woman**. The medicine-man's heart to boil, for that purpose her bucket; and her stirring paddle, with that she stirs around the medicine-man's heart and boils it; and her tongs, with that she picks up rocks, hot rocks. Then she causes the stones to steam in her bucket, the medicine-man's heart she boils. The medicineman's heart, for that is her rock bucket medicine. Now then for the medicine-man she sang, whereat then did die the medicine-man. Now my paternal grandmother, the **Old Rock Woman**, has done so.<sup>1</sup> (emphasis added)



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## Old Rock Woman

**Then, 'tis said, (the mountain) Aldauyakwadis was told of it.** "Now the **Old Rock Woman** has killed the medicine man," was he told. Just then did he prepare himself, and his hair he tied up into a top-knot. Then dust, 'tis said, on his forehead he put. Then there when he came, now dead lay the medicine-man. His arm he picked up, now wrenched loose the medicine-man's arm. Off yonder into a pit he jumped with the medicine-man's arm. Then, 'tis said, he danced, with the medicine-man's arm he danced rapidly around brandishing it. Now he sang, danced with it.<sup>1</sup> (emphasis added)

**Then, 'tis said, some time elapsed. Up he looked, across to his younger brother he looked; now his younger brother, for his part, that same thing did do, now again that same thing did do his younger brother.** Then, 'tis said, they on either side did nod to each other. Thus they slew the medicine-man, the evil-minded medicine-man. The medicine-man's arm he brandished before him; just as a knife is brandished before one, that he did with it. Thus when the world was set, when down it was placed, then thus it happened. (Thus) the s'omldholxas makes medicine, my paternal grandfather did make medicine with (this song and dance). Someone, I believe the Children Creator, made things thus. Thus, Children Creator, they call him, nowadays people call him thus. Thus much did my mother tell me, but she did not see it either. This, for its part, is a myth indeed.<sup>1</sup> (emphasis added)

**Want more information?** Contact a member of the HNAT.

## 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.

Email: [hugo@jeffnet.org](mailto:hugo@jeffnet.org)

Web Page: <http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/>

Edited by Jean Boling, Karen Rose, & Mike Walker

### Hugo's Native American Team (HNAT) Hugo Neighborhood Association

Jean Boling, Member  
*Hugo Neighborhood* &  
Historic Sites Chair,  
Josephine County Historical Society  
214 NW Booth Street  
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

Janet McKy, Member  
*Hugo Neighborhood*  
6497 Hugo Road  
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

Wayne McKy, Member & Officer  
*Hugo Neighborhood*  
6497 Hugo Road  
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

Karen Rose, Member & Web Master  
*Hugo Neighborhood*  
575 Red Mountain Drive  
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

Mike Walker, Member & Officer  
*Hugo Neighborhood*  
3388B Merlin Rd #195  
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

## Sapir's Old Rock Woman: *Takelma Texts*



Brochure NA-18E Of Hugo's  
Native American Brochure Series



*Edward Sapir: 1910<sup>1</sup>*

September 9, 2011

Hugo Neighborhood Association &  
Historical Society  
Josephine County Historical Society