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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 Acorn Woman is 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.

2. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society & Josephine County Historical Society. September, 2011. *Gray's Danmologol or Medicine Rock*. Hugo, OR.

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## Acorn Chieftainess = Acron Its - Chief

**While Dan Mologol**<sup>2</sup> was located in Hugo's Lowland Takelma neighborhood, it seems that she and the other Medicine People (i.e., Acorn Woman, Mudcat Woman, Chicken Hawk . . . ) were known throughout the Takelma territory, and beyond. Like their neighbors, the Takelmas did a lot of traveling, even yearly to The Dalles to trade, and they carried their stories with them. The old Indian Trail over Mt. Sexton was not only traveled regularly by the Takelmas but by other natives peoples as well.



*Salmon*

**The Takelma Myth Number 21. "Acorn Woman Revenges Herself upon a Medicine-Man."** is part of *Takelma Texts* by Sapir (pages 169 - 171).<sup>1</sup>

"A medicine-man has blown thee off," the Acorn used to be told (by) men of long ago. That the Acorn was wont to be told, old men did say it. By means of a wind did the medicine-man blow off the acorns, a medicine-man it was that blew off the acorns. Now, 'tis said, the Acorn Chieftainess, that one was sitting in her house and saw how they were being blown down. She had sent herself there to the tree. Now just the medicine-man had blown her off. Thereupon the medicine-man having been slain, this old woman, the Acorn Chieftainess, then dried him, the medicine-man having died; since this old Acorn Woman had he blown off, for that reason she dried him. Like dried venison, thus she dried him.



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## Medicine People: Rock Old Woman, Acron Woman, Mudcate Woman, & Chicken Hawk

For a long time that she did. Now whenever a medicineman died, she used to dry him; the old woman did so. Then, 'tis said, a long time elapsed. Now then two persons "To the old woman let us journey. Much venison there is with her, people say," said to each other. Then, 'tis said, to the old woman came the two persons. She did not look at them as they came into the house, with her back towards the fire she sat.<sup>4</sup> There sat the two persons; to them she did not speak. A long time elapsed, just then she took up a basket-pan. Then dried venison she took and into the basket-pan she put it. Then, 'tis said, she placed it down at their feet, and then with her back to the fire she sat. She did not look at the persons when this dried venison she had put down at their feet. "Now the food is probably being eaten," she thought.

Then, 'tis said, when a little while had elapsed, just then in back of her across the fire she looked. Now the two persons just had died. Just then she turned towards the fire, then took up water. Then, 'tis said, the water she put in her mouth, and p'^+, she blew it over their cheeks. The two persons arose, had recovered now. Then, 'tis said, "What did you think? 'Dried venison she keeps,' did you say about me? Dried venison did you think it was? This, for its part, is the flesh of medicine-men, not dried venison. Since they blew me off, for that reason did I dry them," said the old woman, Old Acorn Woman did say so. Indeed that really was the Acorn Chieftainess. Just up to there it proceeds.<sup>2</sup> Since the medicine-men did blow her off, for that reason did she do it to them.

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

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## 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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## Sapir's Acorn Woman: *Takelma Texts*



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Josephine County Historical Society**