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## Takelma Indians

**The Takelma Myth Number 16. “The Four Otter Brothers And Chicken-Hawk”** is part of *Takelma Texts* by Sapir (pages 148 - 155).<sup>1</sup>



There were four Otters and one younger sister of theirs; that one to get married they took to Chicken-Hawk. A chieftain, I guess, he was, so that to him they went, with her they went to get her married.

Then a long time elapsed. They went, they went, they went. Right there in the trail a snake lay across, lay as though dead. “Away!” He did not stir. The oldest jumped over him, there ahead of him was the snake. And one again did say, “Away!” He did not stir. Then again the girl jumped over him. Then one again (did say), “Away! I’m going there.” He did not move, no matter how many times he was told that. Then one again did say, “Away! I’m going there.” Like dead he lay, he did not move.

Then one was left. “Away! I’m going there,” over and over again he said that. Now the youngest person became angry, that one did say that, and angry he became. “Now why do you not move?” Now on top of him he stepped; just then “He+!”<sup>2</sup> said the snake; he was capable of speech, as it seemed. There he passed. “He+!”<sup>3</sup> To the east when you go, my nephews, they will destroy you,” he said, the snake said that. Then, when he had said that, the heart of the girl became sick.

Then they went, their journey was resumed, on they went. Then the girl did cry, crying, “Ah, I wonder whether my elder brothers will return!” She cried, thus crying, “I wonder whether my elder brothers will return, since that they were told, ‘My nephews, they will destroy you,’ since they were told.” Then they went, I don’t know where they arrived at the ten houses. Now the Otters did come, taking their sister to get married. The first house was prepared for them; there they passed. Again one house was prepared for them; there they passed. - Now again a house was prepared for them; there they passed.

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## The Four Otter Brothers And Chicken-Hawk

Now three houses they had gone by. Again one house was prepared for them, they passed it by. Now four houses had they passed by. One again was prepared for them; now again they passed it by. Then again one house was prepared for them; now again they passed it by. Now six houses they had passed by. Now again they passed one by. Again one they had prepared; now again they passed it by. Then one again was prepared for them; now nine houses they passed by.

Then this last house, just therein did they enter. Now of the people of the nine houses the hearts were sore, for before they had said, “It is to us probably that they are bringing her to be married,” so that for that reason had the houses been prepared. “It is to us probably that they are bringing her to be married,” they had said. Then they who had brought her to be married remained; now for five days did the Otters remain with their brother-in-law. Then, ‘tis said, when they had dwelt there five days, then “Now we are going, now down river we return,” they said.

But their brother-in-law Chicken-Hawk saw what they were doing in the neighboring houses, he knew that it was intended to kill him. “Now the Otters are about to return down river,” they were saying, and so in the neighboring houses they prepared themselves. “Let us kill them, let us destroy them!” said these people in the neighboring houses. “Tomorrow the Otters intend to go,” that did they say, for their part, in the neighboring houses. Now then, ‘tis said, they all went out, to the mountains proceeded all the people in the neighboring houses, on both sides of the mountains. And then, ‘tis said, (the Otters) went off; as they went, “Here you shall return, should a slight wind come,” said their brother-in-law to them. “In that case you shall not go on, you shall return here,” he said to them. Then off they went, but the people of the neighboring houses “Just when they reach afar off, let us do away with them,” they said to each other.



*Salmon*

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## Chicken Hawk

Then these (Otters) did go. Just when they reached afar off, then the people of the neighboring houses did all proceed to the mountains; just then a wind blew like now,<sup>1</sup> a little bit. But though their brother-in-law Chicken-Hawk “You shall return here” had said to them, they did not think of it. Then in a little while a wind came, just a little bit like now. Now then it also rained; then hail, in its turn, did come; then did the wind break everything, firs, to pieces; then snow, indeed, did come. They had almost returned back, just half way the Otters were destroyed. But their brother-in-law did know of it. “He’! Although before ‘You shall return here,’ I said to them,” he said. Then, ‘tis said, the wind did cease, and the snow and rain and hail, now they did cease.



Then, when a long time had elapsed, he went out of the house. On either side he looked, now on both sides of the mountain they were seated. Then his knife did Chicken-Hawk take up; then to either side of the mountain his knife he thrust, and he himself did destroy the people, his own kin. Then into their houses he returned and set fire to them all. Then, ‘tis said, into his own house he returned, lay down to sleep. Now he slept; his heart was sore, for his wife’s brothers had been destroyed. Then, ‘tis said, he himself having also destroyed his own kin, for that reason was his heart sore. He slept. Then how long did he not sleep? Now early in the morning the door of the house was scratched against. Then “What’s doing it?” he said, thinking; continuously indeed the door of the house was being scratched against. “It’s probably a mouse that’s doing it,” he thought. Then some time elapsed, continuously the door of the house was being scratched against. Then, ‘tis said, some time did pass, and he arose, opened the door of the house. Just a child it turned out to be, half burnt. “My orphan!”<sup>1</sup> Now he lay down with it clasped in his arms, and again he slept.

Just that far indeed do I, for my part, know it; no further still is it told. For that reason is there a wind nowadays. The winds he had destroyed, but one child did grow up full of fire, half burnt. Now as the door of his house was scratched against, for that reason did he do that—‘tis true he himself had destroyed his own kin—, therefore “My orphan!” he said. Now go gather and eat your bap<sup>2</sup>-seeds.

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

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

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## Sapir's Chicken Hawk: *Takelma Texts*



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Native American Brochure  
Series



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

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

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Josephine County Historical Society**