

KLAMATH ETHNOGRAPHY

BY

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prevent ice forming over the lake (4000 feet), snowdrifts a depth of some ten inches as that of the Williamson lake, are distinctly warmer. Affected largely by the food villages in April or May, the flat valleys have dried, houses need refurbishing. Klamath congregate at the shore. For example, some weeks to catch and dry spent on the marshes and mud flats. When the camas on the marshes, especially to us from mid-August to the busy with this harvest, men whose habitat is in eastern autumn, seeds, berries, and where these are plentiful. For example, move directly to the water lake, to garner these seasons for journeying to visit or laying up a store of fish understood that the winter during this season, for many very activities. But it is the Klamath division, whose winter on the Williamson river, to scatter the pond-lily harvest in the beginning of the Klamath year.) In the latter month, to start the winter, a task completed at hand.²¹⁹

people at the mouth of Williamson river can go only as far as ya'ak in packing afoot the high, canoes can go upstream on the prague river (see the maps,

figs. 1-3). When returning in the fall, they take canoe as far as Kirk, storing the vessels in the lake bottom there until the next season, and packing the rest of the distance to their craft on the middle river, some twenty miles distant.

A similar seasonal migration of the Klamath falls group takes them to Barclay spring and Modoc point on the lake front for the spring fishing. Crossing the lake to dē'kto'ks, they leave canoe and march by a well-defined trail to Wocus marsh for the lily-seed harvest. At the end of their stay, they sink the canoes used on the marsh in the water at woks'a'lks, hide grinding slabs and similar articles in the juniper thickets, and retrace their way across the lake to Algoma. After gathering wild fruits there they return to the falls for the winter.²²⁰

When one considers that the countryside teems with a wide variety of animal life in summer, and the seeming abundance of seeds, roots, and fish, it is difficult to comprehend the change that winter brings. Yet outright starvation in winter must have been frequent. The constant refrain of Ogden, who visited the country in the winter of 1826, bears on the scarcity of game, the near approach to starvation, throughout the months his party was there.²²¹ Yet it is not incredible in view of the deep snows that cover the land, the thick ice on lake and marsh, when travel is at a minimum and fish can no longer be taken. Snow falls early, in November, and lies on the ground in exceptional years well into May. The early spring, when winter stores have run low, is the critical period. When the lake remains frozen unduly long and snow still falls, starvation sets in. Then horses are killed, and finally the hides or even dressed elk skins are roasted in their extremity. Nothing will induce them to turn to dog flesh.²²² When the snow leaves the prairies, they hasten to glean whatever roots have escaped the previous season's harvest. Then too a few trout may be had to eke out their subsistence.

Fishing

Fish, the primary food stuff, can be taken almost anywhere in Klamath territory, but the supply is more plentiful in some sections than in others. Williamson river is one; fish can be caught there the year round, but in many other streams they run only in the spring.

²¹⁹ Compare Gatschet, 1:xxix.

²²¹ Elliott, *The Peter Skene Ogden Journals*.

²²² This has served as a specific against smallpox, however.

For this reason, the greatest number of settlements cluster on that river. The runs of fish there begin in the early spring, are at their height in March and April, and continue, one variety following another, into the fall. According to Coley Ball seven kinds of fish run in the spring, followed in the fall by the larger varieties. Mid-September marks the end of the sucker run. The time of the salmon run is not clear. Gatschet's statement is that salmon ascend the Klamath river twice a year, in June and again in the autumn.²²³ This is in agreement with my information, that the run comes in the middle-finger month, May-June, and that the large fish run in the fall. Pat Kane did not know whether there is more than one variety of salmon, which he called *taia'les*.²²⁴ They ascend all the rivers leading from Klamath lake (save Wood river, according to Ball), going as far up Sprague river as Yainax, but are stopped by the falls below the outlet of Klamath marsh. Other fish live in the marsh, however.

There are not many special attitudes toward fish nor restrictions on their use. The principal restriction is that one bereaved of a spouse or child may not fish nor even cross a river for fear the fish will flee. This must have been a serious curtailment of the mourner's activities, considering the high infant mortality which must have existed. At the expiration of a year, the mourner must use a special sweat-lodge a second time before he can resume his occupation. Throughout this period he may not eat fish for fear of sickness.

Respecting any fish that is caught with difficulty, for instance those speared through the ice, its gall (*bis*) must be thrown back into the water else others will cease to come. The fish are thought to turn away if this rule is neglected as children turn aside from a morsel of fish they think too small. The practice is called *notowa'ble a'mbotöt*, to throw back into the water.

In place of the first salmon ceremony common among the Northwest Coast tribes,²²⁵ the Klamath have an observance over the first sucker. The locale is *wo'kstat* on the bank of Sprague river near the settlement *komä'ëksi*, south of Braymill. Above this spot is a cave styled the home of *Kamü'kümps*, the culture hero. The first sucker is

²²³ Gatschet, 2:436.

²²⁴ Information from the lower Klamath river confirms these data. Salmon run through Yurok territory at the mouth of the river in April and in early autumn; the latter being perhaps the greater run, for at this time the Kepel dam rites are held (Kroeber, Handbook, 58, 60, 84).

²²⁵ There is no first salmon ceremony, no prayers for salmon, no salmon heart magic like that of the Yurok, no prohibitions against speaking of the salmon, as among the Wishram, and no special relations or taboos connecting twins with the salmon.

roasted and allowed to be taken home but roasted thus observed, suckers will be p the rite is held, the only p

Kamü'kümps was living at [the cave] using *stêholas mats* leaks. Right at his home he k ming up there, so *Kamü'kümp* the river bank. He did not ta way the *psä'odiwas* [humans, this, fish came in great number

There is no individual Nor, for that matter, are tories, berry or seed patcl of fishing rights. Even t the dams have no particula those who live near-by to t they know best how to use

One reason for this is tiquity. They are, in fact. These are quite common in stream bed favors their an eddy of still water in w refuge from the swift cur by the loggers who have c their logs. Gatschet seen structions, but it is clear configuration. These are extending out from one b Williamson river at *takal* river bank to enclose a po used in connection with Klamath.

Fish are taken mostly fessional fishermen everywl able to be trifled with. Y spear, and there is some kinds of dip net as well as

²²⁶ See Gatschet, Mythologi.

²²⁷ Other dams on Lost rive

²²⁸ The Klamath do not p *külxameh* and *sl'ë'ds* as "fish-ki tively flax and nettles used for