

How Did The Indians Get Their Names?

Many Tribes had a legend similar to this Coeur d'Alene story. The anthropologist James Teit obtained a short version of this story in 1904 from Dorothy Nicodemus' husband. The following longer version was given by Dorothy Nicodemus and translated by Julia in 1927 for Gladys Reichard. It is published in her book **An Analysis of Coeur d'Alene Indian Myths**. It shows how the trickery of Coyote was sometimes helpful and also how the Coeur d'Alene would sometimes take humorous digs at their Spokane neighbors.

A long time ago a large monster inhabited the country around the mouth of the Palouse River. He had killed many people. Coyote made up his mind to rid the country of this evil being.

One day the monster was mourning for his dead dog. Coyote said, "It's too bad! I told you to call off your dog when our dogs started to fight. I saw they were mad." "Shut up! I'll gobble you up!" said the monster. Coyote answered, "Do you mean you will gobble me up? I'll gobble you up! Let's see if we can gobble up that tree. You try first!"

The monster tried, but left about three feet of the stump standing. Coyote laughed. "I thought you were smart. Now look at me!" He gobbled. When he was through not a splinter of the tree was left. "Now look," said Coyote. "That is the way real gobbler's gobble. Let's go and gobble that cliff. You go first."

The monster gobbled at it but when he had done his best some rocks were left. Coyote laughed. He gobbled and not a pebble was left. "You are not like me," he bragged. "I am the smart one!" "I might gobble you up," said the monster. "All right try it!" said Coyote.

Before Coyote could look he found himself inside the monster's stomach. There were lots of people playing games

Some were playing the stickgame, others cards, still others were dancing a war dance. Coyote said to them, "What's the matter with you all? You are pitiful. Don't you know you are in the belly of a monster. I am getting out of here. Get yourselves ready. Soon I'll be back, and then I'll fix it so you can come out."

He tickled the monster's heart and was spat out. He landed far away. Coyote picked up a stick to make a hoop and

the one who eats really good things...

The monster said, "Just a minute ago I got through eating two nice-neat, good-looking people." Coyote said, "I was the one who ate those two." "If that's true vomit them out!" "Come," said Coyote. "Sit down here, close your eyes. I'll close mine and we will see what we can vomit. You do it first!"

The monster vomited two people and Coyote vomited four mice. Coyote threw



continued making hoops as he talked to the monster. "Your insides show you are a good gambler. You are a good card player." Coyote made a hoop the size of the monster's mouth and was now making two smaller ones the size of his nostrils. "You are a good war dancer."

The monster answered, "Because you are no good, that is the reason I vomited you up. I eat only good things." Coyote said, "You only think so. You eat mice. I am

the mice in front of the monster and put the people on his side. "Hahui! Let's open our eyes." Coyote laughed. "Those nice-looking ones are the ones I ate."

The monster could not believe his eyes. "They are the ones I ate. I never did eat mice." "Look where they are, on your side." "I'll gobble you up!" "You're a mouse-eater!" Coyote had the hoops in his hand. He held them flat. "All right, go on, gobble me up..."

Again in a twinkling of an eye, he was in the monster's stomach. "Hahui!" he said to the people. "Wait till I run out, then you can get out too..."

Coyote ripped open the stomach of the monster. He could see the light again. The people ran out. He cut out the monster's heart. Then he set the large hoop so it would hold the mouth open and the smaller ones in the nostrils. Everyone came out. The monster died. Coyote ran off to find Rabbit, his friend.

Rabbit was hiding in the jointgrass, and Coyote told him to cut the giant up. He cut him all up. Coyote took the pieces and threw them about. Each time a piece of the monster's body hit the ground smoke came up and made a dwelling. He threw the head down the river saying, "You will be the Wishram Indians, and you will have big heads." He threw the scalp saying, "You will be the Crow Indians, and you will have long hair." He threw the legs and said, "You will be the Blackfeet Indians, and you will be a tall people." He threw the ribs and the chest saying, "You will be the Nez Perce Indians, and you will have large bodies." He threw the stomach and said, "You will be the Gros Ventre Indians, and you will have big bellies." Then he threw the heart saying, "You'll be the Coeur d'Alene Indians, and you'll be noted as brave fighters, and of cruel disposition." Thus he threw pieces

to all the tribes, to the Salish, to the Columbias, and so on. He thought everyone had received a piece. Then he remembered that one tribe had been forgotten. He looked around, but could find no scraps to give them. Then he wiped his hands on some grass and threw the grass to this tribe. "You will be the Spokane Indians, and you will be poor," he decreed.

That is the end of my story.