

First Ship Seen by the Clatsop

Retrieved From: *Oregon Indians* by Stephen Dow Beckham

The son of an old woman had died. She wailed for him a whole year and then she stopped. Now one day she went to Seaside. There she used to stop, and she returned. She returned walking along the beach. She nearly reached Clatsop; now she saw something. She thought it was a whale. When she came near it she saw two spruce trees standing upright on it. She thought, "Behold! it is no whale. It is a monster."



She reached the thing that lay there. Now she saw that its outer side was all covered with copper. Ropes were tied to those spruce trees and it was full of iron. Then a bear came out of it. He stood on the thing that lay there. It looked just like a bear, but his face was that of a human being. Then she went home. Now she thought of her son, and cried, saying, "Oh, my son is dead and the thing about which we heard in tales is on shore."

When she nearly reached the town she continued to cry. [The people said,] "Oh, a person comes crying. Perhaps somebody struck her." The people made themselves ready. They took their arrows. An old man said, "Listen!" Then the people listened. Now she said all the time, "Oh, my son is dead, and the thing about which we heard in tales is on shore." The people said, "What may it be?" They went running to meet her. They said, "What is it?" "Ah, something lies there and it is thus. There are two bears on it, or maybe they are people." Then the people ran.

They reached the thing that lay there. Now the people [from the ship] held two copper kettles in their hands. Now the first [Clatsop] reached there. Another one arrived. Now the persons [from the ship] took their hands to mouths and gave the people their kettles. They had lids. The men pointed inland and asked for water. Then two people ran inland. They hid themselves behind a log. They returned again and ran to the beach. One man climbed up and entered the



thing. He went down into the ship. He looked about in the interior of the ship; it was full of boxes. He found brass buttons in strings half a fathom long. He went out again to call his relatives, but they had already set fire to ship. He jumped down. Those two persons had also gone down. It burnt just like fat. Then the Clatsop gathered the iron, the copper, and the brass. Then all the people learned about it.

The two persons were taken to the chief of the Clatsop. Then the chief of the one town said, "I want to keep one of the men with me." The people almost began to fight. Now one of them was taken to that town. Then the chief was satisfied. Now the Quenaiult, the Chehalis, the Cascades, the Cowlitz, and the Klickatat learned about it and they all went to Clatsop.



The Quenaiult, the Chehalis, and the Willapa went. The people of all the towns went there. The Cascades, the Cowlitz, and the Klickatat came down the river. All those of the upper part of river came down to Clatsop. Strips of copper two fingers wide and going around the arm were exchanged for one slave each. A piece of iron as long as one-half the forearm was exchanged for one slave. A piece of brass two fingers wide was exchanged for one slave. A nail was sold for a good curried deerskin.

Several nails were given for long dentalia [shells used for decoration and as a form of currency]. The people bought this and the Clatsop became rich. Then iron and brass were seen for the first time. Now they kept these two persons [from the ship]. One was kept by each chief; one was at the Clatsop town at the cape.

