

# **MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF ALASKA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649120239

Myths and legends of Alaska by Katharine Berry Judson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**KATHARINE BERRY JUDSON**

**MYTHS AND  
LEGENDS  
OF ALASKA**





TINGLET INDIANS IN DANCING COSTUME

# MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF ALASKA

SELECTED AND EDITED BY

KATHARINE BERRY JUDSON

AUTHOR OF "MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST," AND  
"MONTANA, 'THE LAND OF SHINING MOUNTAINS'"

ILLUSTRATED



SOLELY OWNED  
BY  
CALIFORNIA

CHICAGO  
A. C. McCLURG & CO.  
1911

1911

Copyright

A. C. McCLURG & CO

1911

Published September, 1911

TO THE  
ASSOCIATION

W. B. Hall Printing Company  
Chicago

## PREFACE

**L**ONG ago, even before the days of the animal people, the world was only a great ocean wherein was no land nor any living thing except a great Bird. The Bird, after a long, long time, flew down to the surface of the water and dipped his great black wings into the flood. The earth arose out of the waters. So began the creation. While the land was still soft, the first man burst from the pod of the beach pea and looked out upon the endless plain behind him and the gray salt sea before him. He was the only man. Then Raven appeared to him and the creation of other beings began. Raven made also animals for food and clothing. Later, because the earth plain was so bare, he planted trees and shrubs and grass and set the green things to growing.

With creation by a Great Spirit, there came dangers from evil spirits. Such spirits carried away the sun and moon, and hung them to the rafters of the dome-shaped Alaskan huts. The world became cold and cheerless, and in the Land of Darkness white skins became blackened by contact with the darkness. So it became necessary to search for the sun and hang it again in the dome-shaped sky above them. Darkness in the Land of Long Night was the cause, through magic, of the bitter winds of winter — winds which



## PREFACE

came down from the North, bringing with them ice and cold and snow. This was the work of some Great Spirit which had loosened the side of the gray cloud-tent under which they lived, letting in the bitter winds of another world. Spirits blow the mists over the cold north sea so that canoes lose sight of their home-land. Spirits also drive the ice floes, with their fishermen, far over the horizon of ocean, into the still colder North. Spirits govern the run of the salmon, the catching of whales, and all the life of the people of the North who wage such a terrific struggle for existence.

So there must needs be those who have power over the evil spirits, those who by incantations and charms of magic, by ceremonial dancing in symbolic dress, can control the designs of those who work ever against these children of the North. Thus there arose the shamans with all their ceremonies. —

The myths in this volume are authentic. The original collections were made by government ethnologists, by whose permission this compilation is made. And no effort has been made, in the telling of them, to change them from the terse directness of the natives. The language of all Indian tribes is very simple, and to the extent that an effort is made to put myths and legends into more polished form, to that extent is their authenticity impaired.

Only the quaintest and purest of the myths have been selected. Many Alaskan myths are very long and tiresome, rambling from one subject to another, be-

## PREFACE

sides revealing low moral conditions. These have been omitted, as have also those which deal with the intermarriage of men and birds, and men and animals. Such myths are better left among government documents where they can be readily consulted by those making a special study of the subject. They are hardly suitable for any collection intended for general reading. The leading myth of the North, however, the Raven Myth, is given with a fair degree of completeness. It would not be possible, nor would it be wise, to attempt a compilation of all the fragments of this extensive myth.

Especial thanks are due to Dr. Franz Boas for the Tsetsaut and Tsimshian myths, to John R. Swanton for the Tlingit myths, to Edward Russell Nelson for the Eskimo myths, to Ferdinand Schnitter, and to others. Thanks are also due for courtesies in securing photographs to Mr. B. B. Dobbs and particularly to Mr. Clarence L. Andrews, both of whom have spent many years in Alaska.

K. B. J.

*University of Washington,  
Seattle, Washington  
July, 1911.*

