Red Bird’s Death
Near the end of summer the boy told his father of his experiences when he had received his red otter medicine. He said, "I have one thing left to do. I must go back and conquer the mighty red bird before I can feel that I have been successful." Late in the fall he decided to go and find the red bird. He told his parents not to worry about him while he was gone. He had strong medicine and would overcome red bird and return soon.
When he arrived at the lake he said, "I wish to be a dead yearling buffalo." He had been given the power to change himself into whatever he wished to be. He became a dead yearling buffalo. Many kinds of birds came and feasted on his body. At last the red bird came but he lit a short distance away. After watching for a time he flew over the dead buffalo and said, "There is my friend the red-bush-berry eater trying to trap me." He flew away.
Next, the boy turned himself into a fat dead elk and the same thing happened.
Then he became a fat dead antelope and again the red bird recognized him.
On the fourth try he thought a fat dead wolf would be good because all of the birds like it. This time before he changed himself into a dead wolf he placed a medicine rope that had been given to him by the old man on the ground nearby.
Many birds came to feast on the dead wolf and soon the red bird appeared, landing on the downwind side. He came close but stopped just outside of the rope and said to another bird, "Throw me a nice piece of fat." The bird threw the piece of fat but it landed inside of the rope. The red bird picked up the fat, smelled it and then said, "That is my friend red-bush-berry eater! You can’t fool me!"
But it was too late. He was already caught by the medicine rope. The boy transformed himself back to his person form, jumped up and started to sing his rope song. He sang this song over and over again while making the motions of pulling on a rope. When he saw that the bird was close enough he made the motions of throwing the bird down. There the red bird was, caught in the rope at his feet! He did not know how to overcome the red bird but decided to pull out all of his feathers. When he had done this and the red bird was naked the boy taunted him saying, "If you are powerful do something now!"
The red bird just shook himself and was covered with feathers again. He tried to fly away but was still caught in the rope. The boy pulled him back again and removed all of his feathers. This happened four times and then the red bird was helpless. He had no more power to restore his feathers. The boy said to him, "You did not pity me when I needed help. Now I do not pity you." He left the red bird to freeze when the weather turned cold.
This boy became a great man and was always successful in whatever he attempted to do. The two songs that he received he gave to the flat pipe and they were sung at the end of the ceremony when the flat pipe bundle was opened. The people today believe that the lake where the red otter medicine was received is Devil’s Lake in North Dakota. It is named “Old Woman’s Lodge.”
Booklets available in the Level IV sequence are listed below. Numbers refer to the Planned Sequence of use in the Teacher’s Manual. Materials developed by these tribes and others in the Northwest are included in the Levels I, II, and III sequences.

1. Warm Springs Animal Stories
   The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

2. Snail Women at Squ’ale
   The Suquamish Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation

3. Blue Jay – Star Child/Basket Woman
   Muckleshoot Tribe

4. Assiniboine Woman Making Grease
   Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation

5. Coyote
   The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

6. How the Summer Season Came
   Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Belknap Reservation

7. Little Weasel’s Dream
   Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

8. Fort Hall Stories
   Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation

9. The Bear Tepee
   Northern Cheyenne Tribe

10. Sioux Stories and Legends
    Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation

11. Kootenai Stories
    Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

12. Chief Mountain’s Medicine
    Gros Ventre Tribe from the Fort Belknap Reservation

13. Coyote the Trickster
    Burns Paiute Reservation

14. Running Free
    Shoalwater Bay

15. Salish Coyote Stories
    Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

16. Coyote and the Cowboys
    Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation

17. Napi’s Journey
    Blackfeet Tribe

18. Warm Springs Stories
    The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

19. Tepee Making
    Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

20. Baskets and Canoes
    Skokomish Tribe

21. Warrior People
    Blackfeet Tribe
THE INDIAN READING SERIES:
Stories and Legends of the Northwest