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In the long ago there were neither animals, birds, nor fish in all the land. There were many spirits, however, and these were all known by zootype names, such as "Wolverine", "Skunk", "Weasel", "Sucker", etc. The woodpecker (Cock of the North), the Flicker and the other members of that family, (brothers) were travelling through the country naming the places because they knew human beings were soon to be created. (This was after the Baker Mountain episode - where all spirits but this family flew down again to earth, but the Woodpecker family continued walking until they reached the place where the earth and the skies meet and there walked back to the Kootenay Country). When they reached the Kootenay Lake country they were sitting on top of a mountain where they saw another spirit travelling near the foot of the mountain, coming from the East Kootenay district. The cock of the North spoke to this Spirit and said, "Open your mouth, I'm going to throw you a bird". He took the heart from a yearling goat, inside of which was a flint which they used to sharpen their knives. They were not offering to feed this spirit because they were fond of it, they wanted to destroy it. The spirit knew at once what their intention was and of the flint, so he drew his head to one side and it flew past him. When they saw this the spirit was too powerful for them they told him not to camp where there were a lot of little springs. The Spirit then told the woodpecker family, "When you come down from the mountain, if you see a Char rolling towards the shore don't touch it". They saw the Char when they came down exactly as predicted. Cock of the North was going to spear it, but Flicker said, "You've been making a hero of yourself long enough, give me a chance." So he waded out after it but the Char kept rolling away from him. Finally he got out into deep water and suddenly a huge animal rose to the surface and swallowed the Flicker entirely. The Char was not really a Char but was made to look like one and was actually a bait to lure Flicker on. The animal that swallowed the Flicker was known as a "Sea Cow" (Where the spirit was warned against camping where the springs were, he really picked out a swampy place to camp but couldn't sleep on account of thousands of little toads that kept him awake. He said something about the woodpecker family not being very smart, and if they couldn't put up a bigger joke on him then that it wouldn't bother him too much).

The Sea Cow was really in the form of an enormous fish, but it had two horns and that was why it was called a sea cow. The Kootenay name for it was not sea cow at all but meant "a thing - neither animal, fish nor spirit - that came from below (either deep down in the water or under the earth, in other words (ya woo nick) a thing that belongs down below) (ya woo - below) (nick - belongs) (When the Rail and snipe called the fish to the conference they told them, "If you do not come all streams and lakes will become dry land"). The remaining members of the Woodpecker Family then went out in the mountain hunting. When they came back they all got together and called the Rail and the Wilson's Snipe and asked them to go up all the streams and call the fish together for a conference. (The Rail to go up streams and the snipe around the lakes). The conference was to take place at Ainsworth. The boulders under the water still show the stripes made by the fish as they came up on shore. As each fish smoked the pipe they spoke, and each one said, "Wait for a time and one will come who will tell you the whole truth". Finally, the last one - the Bull Head, a small fish about 4 or 5 inches long with a large head - came. He didn't speak but as he smoked with the first puff the smoke came from his eyebrows and struck out some distance in the lake. The second puff was from his other eyebrow and it struck the lake in exactly the same spot. The Bull Head was the

Cock of the North and his brothers started after him. The sea cow made for a cave near where Nelson now is and woodpecker followed him and stood above the cave intending to shoot a dart into it, but the sea cow came out before he was properly set for the shot and got away from him. Woodpecker's tracks can still be seen in the rocks near the cave mouth where he stood. Before doing so he gave a spear to one of his brothers and told him what to say when the sea cow came out. It was to say "This is the Cock of the North who is spearing you" - He was not to mention his own name. Woodpecker then went up on the mountain and gave it a kick and the mountain opened up and out came the sea cow. The small brother said as he had been told but gave his own name instead of Cock of the North. The sea cow was not afraid of the little brother and said, "I will swallow you as I did Flicker" and the little woodpecker ran away. The sea cow was very much afraid of the Cock of the North. When Cock saw what had happened he leapt down and took the spear from his brother and cast it at the sea cow, who was now almost out of sight, and wounded it in the foot, but the sea cow broke loose and got away. From this point the story is the same until they had followed around to Salmon river and Cock of the North again speared it in the foot. This time it bled and turned the water red (Yak no sookey - where the water is red). It got out of the salmon river and back into the Columbia and from there went up Windermere Creek. Near the headwaters of the stream, about 6 miles from Windermere, there is a huge cave like hole in the rock. This, the Indians say was made by the sea cow turning around to get away from Cock of the North and his brothers.

In those days the Kootenay and Columbia rivers were joined and Woodpecker then sent word to the other great spirit to come up to where canal flats is now and block the channel. By the time the sea cow reached the upper lake Coyote was with the Woodpecker family and he intended to get the sea cow himself with the Tomahawk he always carried. Just as he raised his arm to deliver the blow the sea cow turned to him and said if he tried to strike him he would swallow him, and coyote being frightened, ran away. The sea cow then continued up the lake and by this time the other spirit had pulled down the mountains from near Findlay Creek with one hand and east of Canal Flats with the other, and instead of finding open water he found dry land. He, the sea cow, was coming so fast that by the time he saw the land he was unable to stop and drove straight into it. There are still two channels to be seen which were made by its horns. Cock of the North was waiting for just this chance and with one well directed shot killed it.

- Throwing the meat - the red meat was Indian people, but where he came to the fat inside the sea cow there was a great deal of it and it was very white. This was thrown towards the rising sun and as he did so he said, "This will be a race of white people". Then he took out the liver and said, "This will be a tribe of people who will be dark" - these turn out to be the Bloods. After he was finished he took one side of the ribs - (the meat was practically all gone) and threw it to the North - close by. You can still see these ribs - the big cut bank immediately north of Dutch Creek. He threw the other to the South quite a distance - the cut bank on the St. Mary's river across from Fort Steele. Now nothing was left and the spirit said, "What about this part of the country, where all this has taken place; we should leave something here". So they gathered up the blood, put it together with their hands and were those who had helped cutting up the carcass took grass and wiped the blood from their hands with it, but even then there was very little of it left. They then said, "This will be the

Once a large party of Kootenays were camped at Premier Lake when a disease (unknown) started among them and practically wiped them out, but a Spirit spoke to one of the men and told him to swim across the lake and the disease would cease at once. This he did and he and the few surviving members of the group were immediately cured.

At another time the whole tribe of Upper Kootenays were in the Alberta foothills hunting, and as they were a nomadic people, they sometimes stayed in a particular district quite a long time, especially if the hunting was good. This time they remained in the foothills quite a long time and finally a disease started among them and, with the exception of one man, the whole tribe was wiped out. This happened a long time ago because at that time the horse was unknown to the Indians. This one man started walking back to the Kootenay country, but he was still sick and very weak and crawled inside the carcass of a buffalo that was lying near the trail he was following. While there a Spirit spoke to him and told him to take the blood still remaining inside the carcass and smear it all over his body. He did so and was immediately cured. He then continued his journey back to the Kootenay country, followed the bend of the river through where Montana and Idaho now are and at last when near the present town of Creston, he saw what he thought was two bears feeding on berries. As he drew nearer, however, he discovered it was a Kootenay