

mssc202

MsSC 202

HUNT, Clair, papers, 10 items

Abstract: Clair Hunt worked as a surveyor and allotting agent on the “diminished” Colville Indian Reservation in northeastern Washington. He had a great interest in the culture of the Spokane, Columbia, and Colville tribes.

Biography: Clair Hunt (1865-1937) came from Iowa to Spokane, WA in 1887. He worked for the Department of the Interior, Indian Service, on the Colville Indian Reservation as a surveyor and allotting agent, 1910-1914. Congress, in 1906, passed legislation opening to homestead entry unallotted lands on several Indian reservations, including the Spokane, Flathead, and Colville. The Colville Reservation opened on September 5, 1916. As a result of his surveys, Hunt published maps of the allotted and unallotted lands on the reservation.

Hunt developed a great interest in native culture and befriended many Indians, hiring several to assist with the surveys. During the course of this work, he wrote down legends and stories related to him by a number of prominent tribal leaders. He was apparently a talented photographer and photographed Indians in the vicinity.

In 1921, Hunt moved to Olympia to serve as Surveyor General for Washington, a position he held until 1925.

Scope and Content: The papers consist of mostly undated, original or carbon typescripts of stories related to Hunt by a number of Indians. Also included are three humorous non-Indian stories, possibly anecdotes, which he found interesting enough to record.

Note: WSHS Special Collections holds two editions of “Clair Hunt’s Map of the south half or diminished Colville Indian Reservation,” and a promotional brochure published by Hunt, “Descriptive pamphlet, south half, or diminished Colville Indian Reservation. General description of the climate, soil, products, and the habits and characteristics of Indian inhabitants.” All are copyrighted 1916.

Inclusive dates: ca. 1906-1916

Restrictions: None

Volume: 10 items

Accession number: 2006.157.4

Box 1

Folder	Contents
1	<p>“Se-mish, or the Guardian Spirit, by Clair Hunt.” 63 p.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">I. How it came that the otter lives in the water [Related by Pach-kus-tew-ya, Chief of the Columbias] (6 p.)II. Death of Sck-a-tas-kos-um, Chief of the Columbias (3 p.)III. Funeral feast of Sck-a-tas-kos-um, the Chief [Sch-ki-a-ki, Chief of the Kalispels, who invited Hunt to attend a funeral] (6 p.)IV. Camas digging/The tribal peace treaty [Related by Quo-tilh-ko, Chief of the Spokanes] (5 p.)V. How the people got fire [Related by Pach-kus-tew-ya, (Joe Moses) Chief of the Columbias] (6 p.)VI. Games (5 p.)VII. The tribal war dances [Smoi-i-ha, Medicine Man of the Spokanes, who conducted the dances for Hunt] (7 p.)VIII. Parade (3 p.)IX. Taking the salmon/Why the salmon go up the river only once a year [Related by Wil-pack-en, member of the Yakamas] (11 p.)X. Gathering huckleberries/Little Moses meets Semish (7 p.) <p>Hunt’s translators for these stories were: Ho-mik-en (Colville), Dan Sherwood (Spokane), Will and Sam Friedlander (Columbia), and Tom Billy (Nez Perce)</p>
2	<p>Untitled. Relating to Christian Churches at Nespelem, Indian view of marriage, etc. Final sentence: “Our Missioner [sic.] must begin with fundamentals. If he can convince these people that white mans civilization is better that that of the Indians, he will have accomplished his most important and most difficult task.” (6 p.)</p>
3	<p>“A sarcasm.” A variation on the marriage story related in Untitled (Folder 2)</p>
4	<p>“I buy a trout.” Story of Hunt, unable to catch a fish, buys one from an Indian. When he returns to camp the Indian has already informed Hunt’s companions as to how the fish was caught. Final sentence: “And, yet, people who do not know them well, say that Indians have no sense of humor.” (2 p.)</p>
5	<p>“The water of the Columbia is not salt.” (1 p.)</p>
6	<p>“How the people got fire”. Version of Chapter V in Se-mish (Folder 1). (3 p.)</p>
7	<p>“How the people got fire, related by Joe Moses, Chief of the Columbia Tribe. Interpreted by William Friedlander.” Version of Chapter V in Se-mish (Folder 1). (2 p.) “Mission Allotting Camp. March 31, 1912.”</p>

8 Three humorous stories:

“A doctor’s mistake.” About a drunk doctor taking his own pulse and thinking it was the patient’s.

“A very dull boy.” About a recitation given by a boy in a backwoods schoolhouse.

Untitled. About a young girl’s behavior.