



LIG^wILDAX^w RESEARCH CENTRE



We are starting a regular newsletter updates to share exciting history from the Archives with the community. Some of you know these stories but others do not, so it is our pleasure to introduce you to our new segment: **Tales from the Vault.**

Johnny Moon's Very Brave Pig

"The following true story was told by Chief Maqualahgulees James Smith of Salmon River in January of 1955 to E. D. Sismey and was transcribed by Cheiftaness Ahomalt Edith Cruse."

The coming of settlers brought many strange possessions to the coast of British Columbia, some of which were admired by the early Lig^wildax^w. Of all the belongings of the settlers, nothing was so unusual nor amazing as their livestock, and the Lig^wildax^w never ceased in their interest to study these strange animals and, to acquire possession of one, as some eventually did, meant a great deal of satisfaction to the new owner.

One of these new owners was Johnny Moon. Johnny Moon had become the proud possessor of a young pig. Now the Lig^wildax^w were very fussy in their eating habits and would not take into their stomachs anything that was unclean. The hen and the pig, therefore, were not to be eaten, as the habits of these creatures were too filthy for the Lig^wildax^w to consider them as food. Thus, the young porker of Johnny moon was destined to grow into a large and healthy pig blissfully unaware that in other parts of the world most of his kind were eventually dispatched to grace the dinner platter once having reached his age and proportions.

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8:30am - 4:30pm, Monday – Friday.

As the pig grew larger it began, time and again, to break out of its pen, much to the delight of the village children, who enjoyed the amusing antics of this cumbersome creature and, with the universal love for animals, desired their new pet might remain loose about the Ligwïldax^w village. As the people of Salmon River noticed that once the animal was loose from its pen, its manners became as clean in habits as the neighbourhood dogs, they agreed. Thus, the porker became the pet of the village children, eating some left-over salmon here, nosing out a root there, or chewing on the wild crab-apples that fell from trees, or munching the berries the children brought him.

So, he grew to a mature and sensible age.

One morning in late spring when the riverside was quite dry, the pig wandered off past Nulgumps and rounded the clay cliff at the point. Here, unsuspectingly, the unusual animal walked into the ambush of a vicious and blood-thirsty cougar. With sudden spring the cougar was upon him, sinking his claws and teeth into the unprotected flesh. The pigs scream of pain and fright awoke the echoes of the whole river, alerting every inhabitant of the village – some fetching guns, others on the run grabbing at sticks and stones to help their unfortunate pet, now in agony.

Before they reached him however, the quiet, domestic animal had turned upon the fierce forest beast and with one savage bite buried its jaws deep into the back of the cougar's neck, holding it helpless. A few shots soon dispatched the beast into eternity but even then, although wounded, the brave pig refused to open its jaws until he was really sure there was no more fight in his adversary.

From then on, the Salmon River Village had a pet to be proud of. Wasn't he really brave and strong like all the Walatsama? Thus, Johnny Moon's pet pig became the Weesa (little brother) and favoured pet of the whole village, for surely it was an unusual animal of whatever species that could stand up to the fierce cougar.

-Ahomalt.