

Lucile Taylor Hansen

and the Katezahl Legend

An Autobiographical Memoir

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(Archival Research Transcribed and Edited by Kathy Doore, from the original hand-written journal of L. Taylor Hansen, entrusted to me by her late Publisher's family.)

I, Lucile Taylor Hansen, was born just before the turn of the century to a young west-Pointer and his wife in a small broken-down fort left over from the Indian Wars, his first assignment after leaving the academy. Could that have been an omen of my later interest? My father would have answered in the negative, after pointing out that my first nurse, a maiden of the Sioux, tried to get rid of a crying baby by tossing it down a winding flight of stairs. What the girl did not know is that my father, just entering the front door, had been on the football team at the Point, and was adept at catching forward passes. Perhaps that was an omen of a life of travel with overtones of adventure.

A Strange Meeting

We had visited my Aunt Berta, Otto's beautiful blonde sister in her charming little cottage in Wells, Minnesota, one delightful summer. I had my first taste of the country, of fresh milk and hand churned butter, home-cooked food, and incidentally, a case of rheumatic fever. This happened when the cow ran dry and we bought milk from a neighbor. It left me with a weakened heart, which however, I never paid much attention to and in turn which bothered me very little after the death of my mother. She was always reminding me that I had a bad left ventricle as a reason for not allowing me to skate. I was not about to give up the fun of skating. When she went to bridge teas, after that I got out the skates. If she came home early, a reprimand followed, but I always managed to first hide the skates. After this brief interlude, we went to California by the way of The Canadian Pacific Railroad. We were to stop off for one night just to see the magnificent hotel at Banff. I was delighted to find that we were going by horse-drawn vehicle of an old fashioned type instead of an automobile. Mother was not happy. She did not like antiques, except expensive furniture.

We had no sooner been seated in the old wagon on the benches facing each other than the horses gave a lurch and darted wildly down the road. Every one was screaming. I stood up to see. Mother tried to pull me down, but I eluded her and the horses turned against an upgrade of the road. It is well that they did so, for the river was on the other side and that is where they were trying to go before the driver pulled on the reins and lashed them. Then came the crash. The carriage turned over and over and our tangled mass of humanity was covered with dust, and shattered glass. When the onlookers finally pulled us out, only my mother did not move. My wide buster-brown hat was cut to shreds and blood was streaming down my face and neck with scalp wounds all over my head. I agreed with the doctor that the wounds were minor, but I still have the scars under my hair. Not so my mother. We were taken to the hotel where she had a special room to which a smaller room to one side was mine. She was given a special nurse night and day and to my questions, I was told that she had a concussion, but that I was not to worry about anything. All bills were being paid by the hotel, and when she was able to travel we would continue on our way back to California to Grand dad's place. He was now living in California, in the small town of Ingot near Shasta.

The hotel staff kept me busy with treks and horseback riding while mother recuperated. We often went to the Indian camps where I was delighted to meet their children. Some times we visited the lovely mountain lakes with our Indian guides, who told stories of the ancient peoples of this land.

Undoubtedly, these stories greatly contributed to my interest in the old legends which multiplied through the years. When mother grew better and wanted to know what I had been up too, I carefully avoided mention of Indians and horses. I was certain she would not approve. There was one occasion of which she would never have approved. That was when I was introduced to the Sioux Chieftain. He was a very large man, straight in the saddle and my interest in what he was telling us attracted his attention. When we were having our lunch he came over and seated himself beside me.

"Where were you born?" he asked.

"In a fort in Nebraska", I answered.

He laughed at the answer. "Where did your mother and father meet?"

"In Dakota."

"Ahhh! Tell me little one, did they ever go to Indian dances?"

"Only once. That was before they were married. My father wanted to go but my mother was wary. In the middle of the dance the big coat my father had on fell open and they saw his uniform. Someone yelled, run, and they galloped off. No one could catch Maverick, my father's horse. You see he had been a wild one.

"Oh, yes, now I understand. I am going to tell you something but you must never tell your mother. In fact, you must never tell anyone. Will you promise?"

"Oh, yes. I love Indian stories."

"This story is about you. In Spirit that night at the dance was a Great Chief of the Dakota. His name was Sitting Bull-- that was only his white man's name. His real name was "He-who-comes-with-the-power-of-the-Bull-Buffalo, and-takes-his-seat-at-the-council."

"He saw that somewhere back in the shadows of time your father had Indian blood. He willed that these young people would fall in love and have a daughter who would somehow find it possible to help the Indian people. His presence is with us now. It will always be with you. I greet you, my child, and I am very proud to breathe upon your palms."

I never saw him again after that day, but I have thought about him very often. As to whether or not the Taylors have Indian blood remains one of the mysteries of my life. Once while living in Los Angeles when I was teaching, I parked my little vacation trailer near an elderly couple who had an Idaho license plate. I immediately went over and struck up an acquaintance. They acknowledged my introduction with a smile. Indeed we know of your father, he went to the University of Moscow, Idaho. We lived near there and are also of the pioneer stock who came in by covered wagon. And we know that he was a great horseman, he tamed a wild animal for his mount.

"Oh yes, please go on."

"Well, if you know this you must know the family skeleton--that he had Indian blood. They have for so long been sweeping it under the rug, you will never get them to admit it."

But she was right, my cousins up in Idaho will not even reply to my letters when I ask. Nor will they tell me what member came to California. Only in 1968 did I find a clue among the Mormons of Arizona. There, a gentleman with twinkling blue eyes and silver hair nodded an introduction, and quickly said: "do you know that the Taylors have Indian blood? The early pioneers who came over here from England, Scotland and Ireland all came without women, a whole group of them. They found women were scarce, but there were a few very attractive Seneca girls from New York state. The ones today who do the steel welding on the skyscrapers."

"I have done some research myself, but not on this continent." I said. "The Taylors were Normans (meaning North Men) who came in with the Norman invasion. The head of the family was Taylorifer which was pronounced Tye. This is very close to Tyr--a mythical son of Votan or Woden. The early pronunciation for Y (as in aye meaning yes). He was killed in the battle of Hastings and his sons were captured by the Scotch Camerons, the Irish and others. The sons then dropped the Fer which stood for Fire in French, and after their conversion to the Christian belief, would not be tolerated. So the name was anglicized to Taylor and has nothing to do with the making of clothes.

He smiled and as he turned, I caught the outline of the Cro-Magnon skull. But he was expressing his thanks with another question. "I have heard it before, but what was the motto on the crest of the family? I want to hear it from you."

I thought of the Indian who pressed my warm breath-laden palms over my heart as I answered: That which we undertake, we accomplish."

She Who Points The Way

When I was sent to the University of Illinois I managed to wrangle an invitation from the mathematics professor and his wife to spend the summer at their cottage on the shores of Lake Superior around the environs of the Ojibway (Chippewa) Indians. This was my second contact with the American Indian. It was here that I first heard the Legend of The White Prophet and regarded it with amusement as a garbled memory of early missionary instruction. As we were arriving to the cabin of my professor, the old chief came to the door and delivered the keys, helping us to unload and telling of tribal difficulties and the severe winter. I could hardly wait to talk with him about his people. He was a bit amused and slightly pleased at my interest. Then came the invitation to go with him to a great meeting of the Tribe. The professor was willing as well, but his wife was hesitant and slightly fearful. However, we prevailed, and that night joined the Chippewa caravan. It was to become one of the memorable interludes of my life.

A great meal was served with wild rice and a corn mush, along with venison prepared with wild herbs before the meeting began. The Chiefs daughter was our interpreter. We sat upon our blankets with the others, and listened to the speakers. Earlier, we had watched as the women prepared our beds with fresh cut boughs and moss. We expected a quiet event with a restful night to follow, but then the speeches become angry and we learned why. The meeting had been called as a prelude to war due to a government employee, a doctor who had been stealing large amounts of money due to the Chippewa, providing whisky instead of medicine. When I had heard enough to realize the situation, I arose and made my way to the speakers platform. The Chief's daughter followed me, as I glanced back I saw the professor's wife crying on her husband's shoulder as he seemed to shrink to a greenish hue.

I began to tell those in attendance quite frankly that they would gain nothing by hanging this man to the nearest tree. I argued, why don't you send a group of your orators to Washington? I had been listening intently and became convinced of their case. I suggested that they bring some minor gift to President Wilson, and then present their grievances, feeling sure that he would help them. Afterall, I continue, he married a woman who was part Indian. Through her father, the First Lady Edith Bolling Galt Wilson, was a direct descendant of Pocahontas--the daughter of the chief of the Powhatan tribe. Suddenly the whole place ignited in chatter, their hostility melting away. A long knife was brought out and my arm was seized. The Chief's daughter whispered, don't cry even if it hurts! This is the ceremony of blood rites. You are being taken into the tribe. At which point a cut was made and I was inducted into the tribe, receiving the name "she who points the way." Later in life I discovered what a strange "open sesame" this naming would allow me each time I was introduced to other tribes in the far distant future from that fateful day. When I did begin to search out other legends in earnest from various distant tribes, I learned that it was useless to talk to the young tribal members. They were uninterested in their history and regarded their legends as so many fairy tales. One had to meet the Chief or the oldest Medicine Man and interest him, and get him "into council" both giving and talking information. Then and only then would corrections and clarification be made. A sense of urgency provoked me on my quest. I was finding that more and more elders had taken their knowledge to the grave. I had become most cognizant of the work of knowledgeable men and the unsolvable mystery for the first time beginning to shimmer like a mirage coming through the mists time. Was there once an Atlantis, or an Old Red Land, as these ancient legends bode?

My next contact with the Red Men occurred ten years later, after I had a B.A. degree and some

business experience, as well as some graduate study in geology and Anthropology at University of California at Los Angeles. A great uncle had left me some two thousand dollars. My parents both being dead by now, I shook off all family proposals of various business ventures and took a grand circle tour of the far north, ending up with a thousand miles by dog-team. During this never-to-be forgotten year, I had contact with many tribes and once more the recurring White Prophet Legend. I regarded this flood of white men with various names as most confusing, but I was becoming much interested in the migration legends of various tribes.

Returning to more study in Anthropology and now also Archaeology as well as Geology, I also began to write Science-fiction to pay my way, gaining recognition until the great Depression began to bury the magazines which had been my outlet. Then after a spell of illness, I went to Mexico to recover, and there met Sedillio, Chief of the Yaquis. With all due apology to the many brilliant scientists and other learned men I have worked with and trained under at five Universities, this red-skinned wild leader of his people was the most learned and the most brilliant. For the first time I began to understand the symbolism of the legends, and to guess the vastness and magnificence of “The Serpent Empire” Atlantic in origin, of whom he was one of the Great-Suns, or hereditary leaders.

He also straightened me out on the Kate-Zahl Legend, while his description of the Chihuahua Valley and the Toltec Empire before the Chichimec and Nahua Invasions made me suspect that he had a decided flair for science-fiction. I countered in amazement, and perhaps with a touch of irony: “Massive irrigation systems and Dams in that desert?”

“My people – The Serpents” have always used dams and irrigation from long beyond the dawn of recorded history. Look at South America and the Andes. At any rate, they are still in the desert. Also to be found in ruins are the massive mounds of the Puans, whom you call the Mound Builders.

After this encounter with the mind of one of The Serpent’s Great-Suns, so soon to die, I returned again to writing and now began to publish with the Ziff-Davis Company and their Chief-Editor Ray Palmer. With the knowledge of Sedillio as a tremendous tool, I began searching out the chiefs of other tribes who now became willing enough to confer when they discovered I could add to their understanding, as well as they could help mine. Thus giant parts of the Jig-saw puzzle which was the past of the Americas began to fall into place. In my Scientific Mysteries Series, published for years by Ray Palmer, I began the description of this puzzle and how the parts might be interlocked into a logical sequence. Then an interesting news item struck the papers. Pilots flying high above the American and Mexican deserts were discovering the ruins of giant human and animal mounds, as well as dams and a vast system of what must have one been tremendous irrigation projects. Sedillio was right!

Now I began an earnest pursuit of the Katezahl Legend, and for the first time began to realize its tremendous extent. A reflection of that amazement is mirrored in my article, “The White Prophet” published by Ray Palmer during the 1940’s. Now I recognized that it is too vast for all the parts to be picked up in one lifetime by one student, and this book will perhaps become the first edition of other volumes written by other authors through future years. Yet this is the cream of the story gathered in a lifetime of pursuit, a research which ended in a long trip through Southern Mexico and a season of study on Archaeology and Calendar Systems at the University of Mexico. Thus has this book grown from a beginning of little knowledge and amused indifference, to a larger knowledge marked by skepticism and finally into a greater knowledge of developing amazement, legend by legend, even as he traveled, thus has been compiled through the years – The Legend of Kate-Zahl, The Prophet.

Lucile Taylor Hansen, Author

(He Walked the Americas, and The Ancient Atlantic)