



Rooted in the Molala Tribe history is the story of the Coyote and the Bear.

The following is from Coyote Was Going There, INDIAN LITERATURE OF THE OREGON COUNTRY, Compiled and edited by Jarold Ramsey.

Coyote's Swallowing Match with Grizzly Bear

Coyote was going up toward Mt. Hood. He met Grizzly Bear.

Grizzly Bear said, "Where are you going, Coyote?"

Coyote said, "I am going up country."

"Why are you going there?" asked Grizzly Bear.

Coyote said, "I am making the world."

Then Grizzly Bear said, "We must fight."

Coyote said, "No, we must have a swallowing match."

Grizzly said, "No! We must fight a duel."

Coyote said, "We will swallow stones."

Grizzly said, "Go ahead, we will swallow them."

Coyote said, "We must have them very hot."

"How many hot rocks?" asked Grizzly.

Coyote said, "You swallow first, then I will."

Then Grizzly Bear swallowed a hot stone, "Now it's your turn", he said.

Then Coyote said, "Yes," and began to swallow strawberries, not rocks! He fooled Grizzly, he swallowed five strawberries. Then Coyote told Grizzly, "Now you must swallow five hot stones."

"All right," said Grizzly. Then he commenced swallowing hot rocks, they burst his heart, and he died.

Now Coyote sat down and studied. "Now I must go, I am going on forever. He is gone now; the world is going to last so long!"

He skinned Grizzly, then began cutting him up; he scattered his body in little pieces all over. Then to the Molala country he threw the heart.

He said, "Now the Molala will be good hunters; they will all be good men, thinking and studying about hunting deer. They will think all the time they are on a hunt."

Indeed, they know how to dodge out, those Molala.