

Stories of the Cahto Tribe

Gopher's Revenge

(This is a line-by-line translation (within the limits of English readability))

Cottontail rabbit was a little orphan child; Gopher was also a small child, too; Gopher was a little orphan child.

Their mother was gone; their father was also gone.

Then, when they had grown up a little they said, "Where is my father, my grandmother?", they say.

"Your father was killed long ago.

Your mother was also killed a long time ago, both of them."

"What killed them?"

"A big old woman fish killed him when she stung him with her stinger.

She killed your mother, too, when she stung her."

Gopher had gone into the ground, they say.

He had looked around, they say.

Then he had gone into the ground, they say.

He had started back, they say.

Then he came back, they say.

Then he said, "I'm going to make arrow, my grandmother,", they say.

His grandmother showed him (how to make them), they say.

He fixed the arrows, they say.

He flaked (arrowheads), they say.

He put the arrowheads on the arrows, they say.

He went underground without his grandmother's knowledge, they say.

He had come up far away at Eel River, they say.

Then he came up close to the fish, they say.

He looked the fish over, they say.

He looked (through) a small hole in the ground, they say.

He nocked an arrow, they say.

He shot, they say.

He shot again, they say.

He made many (arrows) stick in, they say.

She only stung over him (missing him), they say.

When she stung them the stones made a rattling sound as the stood, they say.

He killed her, they say.

She died, they say.

He turned her over, they say.

He looked at her, they say.

He went back home, they say.

He had seen the creek full of people (she had killed), they say.

He went back home, they say.

"Where have you come from? she asked, they say.

"My grandmother, I went to Eel River and killed the fish," he said, they say.

That is the fish that killed people.

There are no people in this place," he said, they say.

When people came from distant lands they gave him many different kinds of things because he killed the fish, they say.

That kind (of fish) nearly came to be, they say.

That kind of fish doesn't exist because he killed the fish, they say.

That is all.

Professor P.E. Goddard's Translation

Cottontail rabbit, a small child, was an orphan. Gopher was also small and an orphan. They had neither father nor mother. When they were grown one of them asked, "Where is my father, grandmother?" . " Your father was killed a long time ago. Your mother, also, was killed," replied the old woman.

"Who killed them I" asked the boy.

"The great fish old woman stung them with her sting and killed them," she replied.

Gopher went under ground in a tunnel to look. He saw the old fish woman and came back.

"I am going to make arrows, my grandmother," he said.

His grandmother showed him how they are made. He flaked the flints and put them on the shafts. He went without the knowledge of his grandmother through a tunnel and came up out of the ground by the great river

He came up close to the fish. He looked at her through a small hole. He put an arrow in place on the bowstring. He shot. He shot again. He hit her many times. She struck over him when she tried to sting him. The stones rattled when her sting hit them. Finally she died. He turned her over and looked at her. He saw the stream was full of the people she had killed. He went home

"Where have you been?" she asked him.

"Grandmother, I have been to Eel river and killed the fish. It is she who has killed the people who have disappeared from this place, " he replied. Many people came from distant countries and gave him

various presents because he had killed the fish. It nearly happened that fish of that sort were in the world. It is because he killed her that they are not.

That is all.

(Based on Cahto oral traditions and beliefs)