

Stories of the Cahto Tribe

Water-people and the Elk

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

An elk was found, they say.

It was walking along this way in Long Valley, they say.

They chased it, they say.

It had tired, they say.

It ran into the water, they say.

It sank, they say.

Many people (asked), "What shall we do?"

The elk has sunk," they said, they say.

A man was staying there courting, they say.

He came, they say.

He dove, they say.

He re-surfaced, they say.

He tied together many ropes, they say.

He dove, they say.

"If I tie its horns with the rope I will tug on the rope," he said, they say.

The Water People had already taken it, they say.

He kept pulling on the rope, they say.

All of them pulled the rope, they say.

Then he re-surfaced, they say.

He came back out of the water, they say.

They butchered the elk, they say.

They carried it back up to the houses, they say.

Then one man said, "I will not live because I swam to the Water People," they say.

Then they brought him back up into the house, they say.

Then that one man was sick, they say.

He was crazy, they say.

It was a little bit dark, they say.

When it was very dark the man died, they say.

When it was morning they burned him, they say.

That is all.

Professor

An elk was seen walking along in this valley. They ran after it. It was tired and ran into the water. It sank. There were many people there. "What shall we do? The elk has sunk," they said.

There was a man staying there courting. He came where they were. He dived. When he came up again he tied many pieces of rope together. "If I succeed in tying it to its horns, I will pull it," he said. He dived again. He found the water-people had already taken it. He pulled the rope several times. They all pulled on the rope. Finally he came up. He walked out from the creek.

They cut the elk up and carried it to the houses.

"I shall not live," said the man, "because I swam to the water-people." They took him into the house. He was sick. When it was getting dark he was out of his head. He died when night came. The next morning they burned him.