

Stories of the Cahto Tribe

Water-panther's Escape

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

Two Indians were wearing deer heads, they say, stuffed deer-heads.

A mountain lion was seen by the two Indians, they say.

It was a big mountain lion, with a deer (being carried) between his shoulders, they say.

It (the deer) reached to the tip of his (the lion's) tail, they say.

It was a big mountain lion, a lion in the ocean, a 'water panther'.

He went into the split rock, they say.

The ground jarred way over there, they say.

They listened in the hole, they say.

"Shoot it!" they told each other, they say.

They were scared, they say.

"Just let that one go!" they said, they say.

That is all.

Professor Goddard's Translation

Two Indians were hunting with deer-heads. They saw a panther. He was very big. He had a deer on his shoulders that reached to the tip of his tail. It was a big panther that lives in the ocean. He went into the split rock (There are supposed to be underground means of communication between certain ponds and the ocean which these mythical animals use.) The ground jarred with the shock. They listened over the hole.

"You shoot," they told each other. They were afraid.

"Let it go," they said. That is all.

(Based on Cahto oral traditions and beliefs)