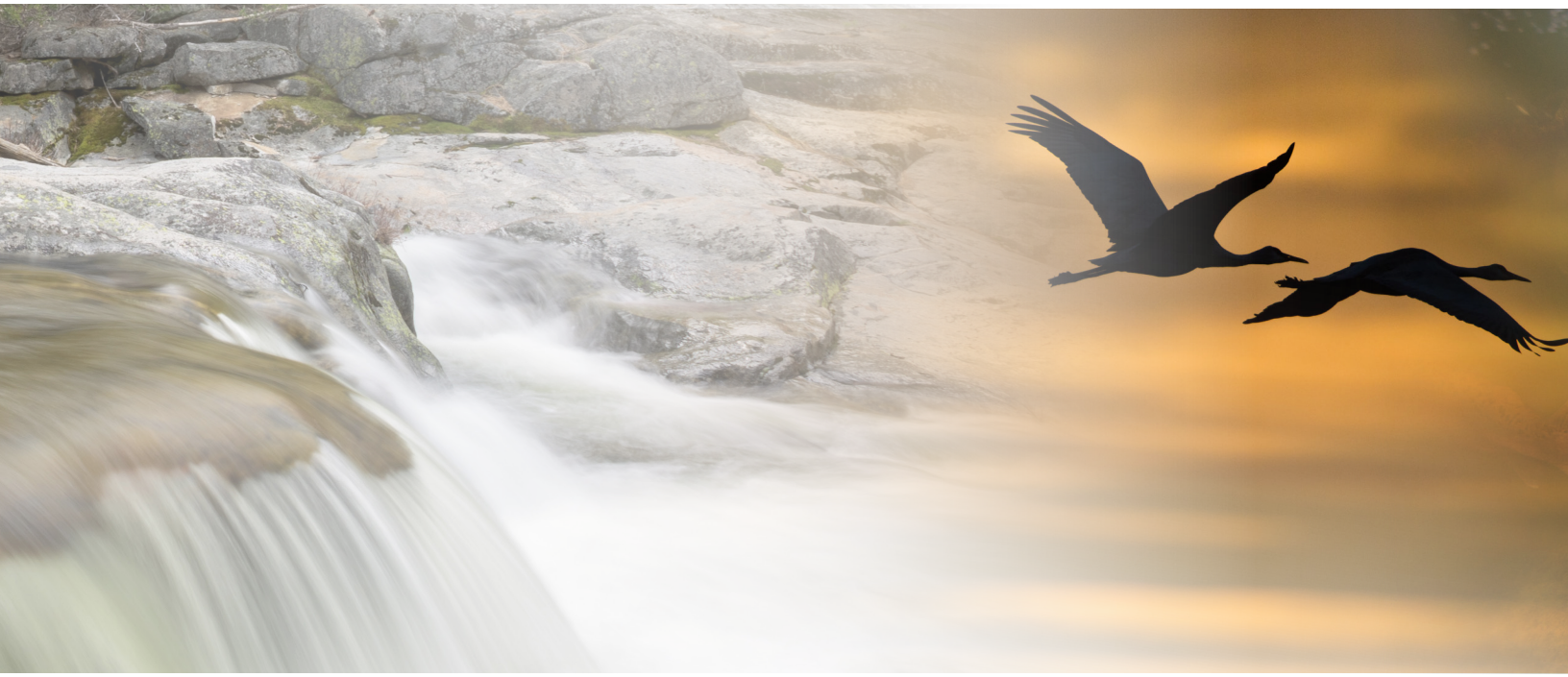
TRIBAL
WATER STORIES 2

April 2018



Dedication

This book is dedicated to the ancestors and the future generations to come.

Disclaimer: This collection of tribal stories is a beautiful gift worth sharing. With the permission of the generous contributors, the stories have been respectfully and carefully edited where punctuation or tense would bring clarity to the reader.

Carole Rains
Editor, designer
California Department of Water Resources Technical Publications

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North Fork Mono

Shared by: Ron Goode

The Making of the World

The world was made

by Falcon *(yayu)*, Crow *(sebitim)* and Coyote *(esha)*,

who dammed the waters in the east

and allowed this world to appear.

The valleys were washed out by the water

before it was held back.

Falcon, Crow, and Coyote made the creeks.

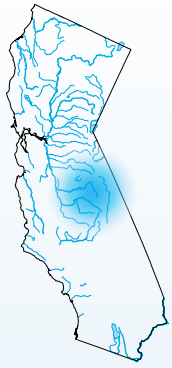
These three are in the east now,

watching the dam that they made,

so that it does not break

and the waters will not once again cover the world.

Mt. Tom courtesy of Ron Goode.



Bishop Paiute

Storyteller:
Harry Cornwell

Shared by:
Raymond Andrew

The Earth Diver Legend

People are on Mount Tom *(ow-wah-ne)*,

the only land in a primeval flood.

Waterfowl *(pu-ya)* dive for the bottom.

Helldiver is not interested.

Coyote dives, pretending to bring up sand,

but had it under his claws before he dove.

Helldiver is called, but says it is impossible.

He is persuaded.

And twice fails.

The third time, as the morning star *(ta-vah-hua)* rises,

he takes a deep breath,

coaxed by coyote, saying, "A little deeper,"

he dives eastward.

And returns at noon after being given up for dead,

bringing earth.

They sprinkle it on the water,

which sinks, leaving only pools and lakes.

A future flood will come,

after which people will see their dead relatives.

Paiute

Bishop/Owens Valley

Earl, Guy Chaffee. *Indian Legends and Songs.* Glendale, California: The A. H. Clark Company, 1980.

Library of Congress Classification E99. P2 E24. Library of Congress Control Number 80067271.

Shared by: Raymond Andrews
© 2014

The Paiute Myth of Creation

In the long ago, there was a time when everything in the world was water.

No mountains. No land. The whole surface of the earth was nothing but water.

To the tiger and his younger brother, coyote, the Great Spirit gave creative power.

The coyote, complaining, said to the tiger, "We need land. There is too much water. Let us make land, so that we can go about on the earth, for now we can go nowhere."

But the tiger said, "There is the vast sky full of air through which you can fly. Why not do that?"

So the coyote flew all the next day throughout the heavens, but on returning in the evening said to the tiger, "Flying is not sufficient. We must have land with its plains and valleys, its hills, mountains and streams, with the grass and plants, trees and animals."

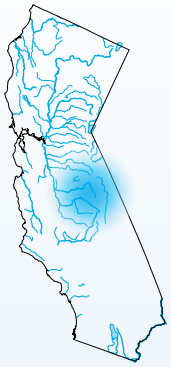
The tiger replied, "All right. We will make land in the morning."

Now the tiger had, in each ear, an earring made of cane about three inches long and about a quarter of an inch thick. The next morning he removed one and after blowing on it, shook out its contents, in the form of dust, into the water, whereupon the dust itself immediately created more dust.

The coyote urged the tiger to keep on, asking him to throw the dust to the east, leaving water to the west.

So the tiger, continuing the process throughout the day, completed his task of making land, leaving the vast sea to the west. As the work progressed, the coyote repeatedly, at the instance of the tiger, ran about to see how much land had been made.

At the last, it took so long to circle the land that the coyote said to the tiger, "Enough! You have done well."



Inyo-Mono

Mono Lake

Storyteller:
Willie Goodale

Transcribed by:
Guy Milton

Frederick S. Hulse , Inyo and Mono County Indian Material, 1935. Funded by the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA) Project.

Shared by:
Raymond Andrew

The Flood

Many years ago it is said there was a flood up north some place.

This is where the story begins: with the two brothers, The Coyotes.

The places where The Coyotes tried to shut the water off can be seen today in the valley. The story begins at a big lake, some place in the north.

There was a lake that had too much water and was running over its banks. The two brothers tried to stop it, but couldn't quite make it. The lake broke through and created a big flood.

The two brothers ran and got ahead of the big flood and tried to quickly make a dam, but the water reached them before they finished their work and broke their dam.

Again, they ran ahead of the water, but couldn't stop the flood. Their dam was broken again and again. They couldn't succeed.

They tried to build a dam near Mono Lake (It is said Mono Lake is what's left of the water the two brothers tried to dam), but again the water crashed through the dam.

The two brothers ran hard ahead of the water to Fish Spring, just where the City of Los Angeles has its dam, but again the water broke through the dam they built.

The two brothers again ran quite a distance ahead of the water to Alabama Hill and tried to build a dam once more, but again were not successful. (It is said that Alabama Hill is part of the dam the two brothers built.)

But all this did not discourage the two brothers. Next, they tried again on the south end of Owens Lake. (It is said that the water left in Owens Lake is what was left of the dam the two brothers built.) But once again, the two brothers were not successful.

The brothers tried a final time to make a dam at Little Lake, but could not stop the water.

Kumeyaay

Included in *2013 San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, Appendix 4-A: Tribal Water Stories of Coastal Southern California*

Dubois, Constance Goddard, *The Religion of the Luiseño Indians of Southern California*, 1908, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1908.

University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 8(3): 286

The Flood

There is a wonderful little knoll, near Bonsall, the Spanish name of it *Mora*, the Indian name *Katuta*; and when there was a flood that killed all the people, some stayed on this hill and were not drowned.

All the high mountains were covered, but this little hill remained above the water. One can see heaps of seashells and seaweed upon it, and ashes where those people cooked their food, and stones set together, left as they used them for cooking; the shells were those of shell-fish they caught to eat.

They stayed there till the water went down. From the top of this hill one can see that the high mountains are lower than it is. This hill was one of the First People.

Kumeyaay

Included in *2013 San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, Appendix 4-A: Tribal Water Stories of Coastal Southern California*

Blackburn, Thomas C., *December's Child: A Book of Chumash Oral Narratives*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1975, 94-95.

Chumash Flood Story

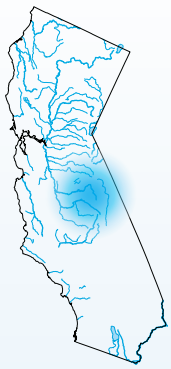
Spotted Woodpecker, Sun's nephew, was the only one saved in the flood.

We don't know why the flood came or how it started, but it kept raining and the water kept rising higher and higher until even the mountains were covered. All the people drowned except Woodpecker, who found refuge on top of the tallest tree in the world.

The water kept rising until it touched his feet. He cried out to Sun, "Help me, Uncle! I am drowning! Save me!" Sun's two daughters heard him and told their father that his nephew, Woodpecker, was calling for help. "He is stiff from cold and hunger," they said.

Sun held his torch down low and the water began to go down again. Woodpecker was warmed by the heat.

Then Sun tossed him two acorns. They fell in the water near the tree and Woodpecker picked them up and swallowed them. Then Sun threw down two more acorns. Woodpecker ate them, too, and was content. That is why he likes acorns so much—they are still his food.



Western Mono

Big Sandy Rancheria

Author:
Cindy Greer

Shared by: Miles Baty

Tippyuni

Tippyuni has spent a lot of time beneath my branches. Her family, members of the Mono Tribe, have lived for years within the reach of my shade. They called this area Larona.

I am Black Oak Tree. They call me Wiyup. My acorns are made into a mush called *akeeba*. It is eaten with almost every meal. It is cooked in baskets with hot rocks.

Tippyuni helps with tasks like food gathering and finding materials for making baskets, and she helps to prepare and store food for winter.

Fall is the busiest season around here. My acorns aren't enough for a whole winter, so trips must be made to other trees to gather more.

Margaret Baty (aka Tippyuni) at age 15. Courtesy of Miles Baty.

On one trip Tippyuni went with her older sister, Siabatoni, and instead of finding acorns they stirred up a nest of bees. They made a quick trip home. I remember them, out of wind and laughing until I thought their sides would split.

It was always a treat when Sūkemŭt, Tippyuni's father, would bring home a deer after hunting. That night at dinner they all enjoyed fresh venison. The rest would be dried and stored for winter.

Winter is the quiet time of year. When the snow comes, I don't see much of anyone. Time is spent indoors. Baskets are woven and hunting equipment repaired.

When spring arrives everyone enjoys fresh food like Miner's Lettuce, wild onions, mushrooms, and the bulb of the Grass Nut Flower.

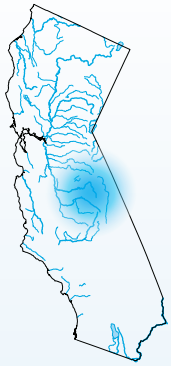
It isn't long before summer and Tippyuni's fingers become stained with the juice of sweet elderberries, gooseberries, and blackberries.

A runner was sent out to invite everyone from near and far to come for a celebration, a pow wow. Hughayna, Tippyuni's mother, is busy preparing. A lot must be done. She is making cider from manzanita berries and making a very large basket of akeeba. Everyone will bring something to share.

Pow wows mark happy occasions and also sad occasions like someone's death. This pow wow will celebrate a good year.

As I watch them dancing around the fire far into the night, I see how Tippyuni has grown into a young woman and it is with sadness I know her time close to me is coming close to an end. The pow wow went on for many days. I love to watch them dance and hear them sing.

Tippyuni moved not far from here. She comes often to visit or gather my acorns. I am always glad to see her.



Paiute

Bishop/Owens Valley

Informant:
Jennie Newlan

Shared by:
Raymond Andrews
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The Flood

In the early times, there was the man we call *Pa ya ta ca ioa* (one who cares for water).

The water began somewhere north, a long way from here, and this man's job was to see that the dams did not break anywhere. So, every day he went back and forth to see to that.

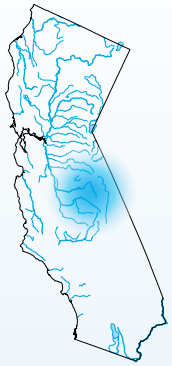
But one day, just as he passed a certain place, the dam broke. He did not look back for awhile, so by the time he saw the break, the bank was washed up pretty badly.

Great volumes of water flowed and flowed. It began to flow into the valleys very slowly, rising ever so slowly, but surely. The natives began to fear that it wasn't going to stop, so they went to higher and higher ground until they were climbing the highest mountain. The wild animals of all kind followed after them. Even the deer and the mountain sheep that the natives would kill and eat followed them.

The flood lasted until it reached a certain height. Then, the water was gone and no longer covering the ground.

The man that cares for water, when he saw the break, right away set to work to repair the break. His repairs caused the water to go away, flowing from north to south, it all went that way and all the low places were filled.

People from everywhere had climbed on all the high mountains to save themselves from the flood. After it was all over, when they came back to their homes, their homes were still there, as though there never was a flood.



Paiute

Mono Lake area
Lee Vining, CA,

Shared by:
Raymond Andrews
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The Fish Story

The fish had once lived in June Lake, but he was so big that he could not stay there. The lake was too shallow for him. He traveled to Silver Lake, but this would not do, either. He went on to Grant Lake, with its dam of large boulders.

At this time, Wolf *(E Sha)* was fishing at Lee Vining Creek and hunting at Red Mountain. Wolf built a dam to keep in the large fish he had caught.

Coyote *(Etza a)* was at Grant Lake *(Hava ka'tun* means "sitting in the shade"*)*.

Coyote came and broke open the dam that Wolf built. As soon as Coyote opened the dam, Wolf knew about it and ran down to the creek below the dam.

Wolf brought a big flat rock to stop the water, but the fish was so big that he went right through the big flat rock and on to Mono Lake *(Cuzavi ba)*, which was a freshwater lake at that time.

But Mono Lake was too shallow for the fish. He rolled around on the bottom, scraping off some of his scales. These scales became *cutza'vi*, which the Indians eat today.

From Mono Lake, the fish went on to Walker Lake *(a gee ba a or pugwe ba a)*, Nevada, but that was not deep enough either and he lost one of his spawns there. It hatched out and ever since, these fish have lived there. They are very large, some of them weighing fifteen or sixteen pounds.

The fish went on to Fallon Lake, Nevada, but this lake was also too shallow for him. He traveled on to Nixon Lake, then Pyramid Lake.

Then he followed the Truckee River and went to Lake Tahoe.

He said, "This is the place where I ought to be."

He whistled as he went into the water. He is there today.

Paiute

Mono Lake area
Lee Vining, CA

Storyteller:
Tina Charlie

Transcribed by:
Helen August

Frederick S. Hulse
, Inyo and Mono
County Indian
Material, 1935.
Funded by the State
Emergency Relief
Administration (SERA)
Project.

Edited with original
text intact by:
Ron Goode, 2014.

Shared by:
Raymond Andrews
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The Fish Story 2

The fish was trout.

Trout is said to have started from Convict Lake and traveled North to June Lake. He found the water was not deep enough to cover up his body; half of his body stuck up, out of the water.

He hatched some fish in the water of June Lake, then went on to Silver Lake and swam about it, trying to find a deep place. He could not find any.

He came up Rush Creek to Grant Lake and did not find this lake deep enough. Trout continued on down the creek till he got to the place called *(du-be-chagee-e)*.

The Indians built a rock dam and tried to head Trout off from going any farther. The fish did not like to stay there and broke through the rock dam.

He went on to Mono Lake and stayed here for a while and swam about.

The Indians collected white volcanic rock from the White Mountain and placed it at the lake edge. Black rock was gathered from the side of the lake from a place called *(To-pu-kee-e)*. With these black and white rocks, the Indians tried to hit the fish to prevent him from going on any farther.

This lake wasn't deep enough for the fish, either, and as he swam, he easily dodged these two different kinds of rock.

And so the Indians put the rocks on the fish. But the fish broke through from underneath them and his skin came off as he crawled away.

As he escaped from underneath the rock, the fish said, "In this lake there will be *(cu-cha-ve)*. In this lake, when the Indians gather food every year, the water will taste bitter and will not be good to drink."

The Indians say that these White Mountain rocks and black rocks created two islands in the middle of the lake, called *(pa-na-moo-gui_ cã-tu dd)* and *(pie-cã-d-d)*.

From Mono Lake, the fish went to Walker Lake, which is south of Schurtz.

"This water is not deep enough for me to stay, so I will plant some trout here and leave this lake," said Trout.

Then, leaving Walker Lake, Trout swam to Lake Tahoe.

And when coming to Lake Tahoe, he swam about in it and said, "In this place I will stay if it is deep enough for me."

And this is where the people catch many trout of all different sizes.

Mono Lake courtesy of DWR Photography Lab

Kumeyaay

Included in *2013 San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Plan*, Appendix 4-A: *Tribal Water Stories of Coastal Southern California*

Originally posted on *www.kumeyaay.com/kumeyaa-religions-and-legends.html.*

Originally published in *Indian legends of the Cuyamaca Mountains*, 1914, by Mary Elizabeth Johnson, as told to her by Maria Alto, a Kumeyaay of the Cuyamaca mountains.

Ahha' Wi-Ah-ha' (Water Colder Water)

The cold spring, located on the high peak of the Cuyamacas, is well known to all lovers of these mountains, and the Indians, who must ever have a reason for the existence of things, tell how it was created and named by one of their mythical creatures long ago.

At one time in the ages past, the *Ah-ha' Kwe-ah-mac'* (Water Beyond) mountains were infested by monstrous giants with loathsome, ill-shapen bodies, who terrorized the surrounding country. These marauders, lurking and watching their opportunity, frequently stole the Indian maids from their villages, keeping them in bondage as slaves.

One of the giants, named *Hum-am' Kwish' wash* (Whip to Kill People), lived in the vicinity of *Pam-mum'am-wah'* (Green Valley). He reveled in the most fiendish greediness, but his innate sense of the beautiful was keen and strong. He not only selected the most delightful places to live, but surrounded himself with objects pleasing to the eye. Always he stole the fairest of the Indian maids and required them to weave the most exquisite designs known in their art of basket making.

His cruelty was extreme, and did his slaves displease him in the least, they met with the most horrible death imaginable.

This hideous being possessed supernatural powers, which he employed in various ways. It seems that he wanted nothing but the coldest water to drink. He tried the water in the streams and tried the water in the springs that abound throughout the country, but never did any of it suit his taste, so he created for himself a spring of colder water.

In one of the most alluring spots on the mountainside, in the dense shade of the fragrant forest of pines and cedars, he brought forth a crystal spring of icy water and named it *Ahha' Wi-Ah-ha'* (Water Colder Water).

Here in this nook of surpassing loveliness, where the graceful lilies nod their stately heads, and delicate fronds of lacelike greenery push

their way up through the carpet of velvet moss, he sent his slaves with their beautifully woven waterbaskets to fetch him a drink when he grew thirsty.

One day, calling a slave, he commanded her to bring some water instantly, with dire threats of punishment should it become tepid before it reached him.

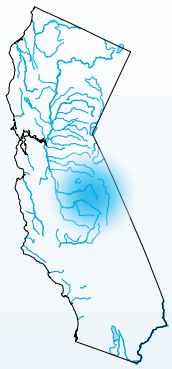
This maiden, radiant with the beauty of the starlight, was so good, so pure, so true that she had been fairly adored by her people before she was so cruelly snatched from their midst. Swiftly she wound her way up through the towering aisles of solemn pines, softly intoning their prayers to the heavens above them. Wistfully longing to be free from the dreadful ogre who held her captive, she begged the trees to plead with the great *In 'ya* (Sun), who rules over all, to take pity on her distress.

The flowers and the birds felt the quivering throb of her anguish. The starry-eyed snow-flowers, gleaming in the shade by the wayside, gave their incense to be wafted on high by the whispering breeze; the cooing dove sent its most plaintive cry above; and every other living thing along the pathway offered its gift in her behalf to *In 'ya* riding the heavens in his flaming ball of light.

When she reached the spring, she sat on its brink and filled her basket with its cold, refreshing water. Gazing into the crystal depths, she caught a glimmer of a shadow quickly passing and at once knew it to be that of the good spirit of the spring.

She beseeched and pleaded with it to save her from the clutches of *Hum-am' Kwish 'wash*, and as she leaned over farther and farther, trying to get one more glimpse of the shadow, the waters rose up and gently engulfed her.

All nature hushed in a sweet silence of gratitude as she was drawn into the protecting arms of *Ah-ha' Wi-Ahha'*, and there she has dwelt in safety ever since.



North Fork Mono

Mono-Nium

Storyteller:
Mrs. Molly Kinsman
Pimona, 1918

Recorded and transcribed with modifications by:
Edward Gifford

Edited and modified by:
Ron W. Goode, 2011

Measuring Worm Saves Falcon

Falcon went hunting and Coyote went with him. Together they camped.

That night, Falcon picked up a small smooth stone to put under his head for a pillow. The next morning, Falcon found himself on top of a great wet rock, as tall as a very large tree.

Coyote became really excited. He bit the rock in his attempt to climb it. He tried every way to reach Falcon, but failed.

He sought the help of Mockingbird, a great chief. Mockingbird told Coyote to send the Mice up for Falcon. The Mice tried, but failed.

Then they asked Flicker to try, for they thought he might reach Falcon with his long tongue. He tried to climb to where Falcon lay on his back, but he too failed.

Woodpecker tried to climb the great rock and also failed. Nuthatch scaled the rock, but he was too small to bring Falcon down.

They all went to find Measuring Worm, who lived in the lower foothills.

Coyote went for him first, but Measuring Worm paid no attention to Coyote. So, Dove went for him. Dove was a Chukchansi and talked to Measuring Worm in Chukchansi, which was the language Measuring Worm spoke.

"All right," said Measuring Worm, "take your fires off the ground, for I am coming up there with the water. I'll come up in the water."

He came up into the mountains and he asked where Falcon was.

All the people were dancing around the great rock, making the dust fly.

Then, Measuring Worm wrapped himself about with a carrying net made of milkweed fiber. He scaled the great wet rock in two steps and brought Falcon down in the carrying net.

Chief Mockingbird said, "Let us all gather and go out to hunt deer."

They hunted and killed some deer and had a great feast. Then, they all flew away. Except Coyote.

Coyote remembered that before they flew away, they sent Coyote down to get a basket of water. When he went for the water, Coyote slid up and down the great smooth rock. All of the people flew over him and made fun of him.

Then he thought to himself, "I, too, shall fly."

He tried, but he fell, hitting the ground hard. He climbed a pine tree.

"I am going to be an eagle," he said.

He again tried to fly, but fell to the ground.

Then he saw a gopher poking his head out of the ground. He caught the gopher and ate it.

"I am going to be a coyote," he said.

Karuk

Klamath River

Storyteller:
Leaf Hillman

Shared by:
Leaf Hillman

World Renewal Ceremony

It's the dark of the moon, the fourth moon in the annual cycle.

The priest at the ancient village – literally "Where the Salmon are Made" – enters the sacred sweathouse and begins his fast.

Five days later, he and his assistants emerge, weak from fasting. They walk down the trail to the Klamath River and they begin fishing on a platform. They continue to fish until one is caught. An altar is then constructed near the river's edge and a fire built. The salmon is put in the fire. A few moments later, the fish is retrieved from the fire and the belly is removed. The belly is then consumed by the priest and the remainder is left on the altar and is sent, via the smoke, as an offering to the ones who have gone before.

The priest returns to the sweathouse. Five days later, he emerges once again. A runner is sent up the river and a runner is sent down the river to spread the word that it is time for the spring fishery to begin.

Throughout the Klamath basin, the lower basin Tribes, the middle basin Tribes, and the upper basin Tribes are all engaged in the activities of harvesting and preserving the salmon. Supplies are put up from the spring run. By this time, a large portion of the run has already passed through the Tribal territories. Those fish from the first run are now in their spawning or holding areas in the upper basin.

Moving forward, on the day preceding the dark of the eighth moon, the priest is returning from his last mountain prayer site. As he returns to the sacred dance area, he crosses a small tributary. As he does,

he makes a prayer to the fall salmon saying that the Tribe is ready for their return and to come back. Everything is good. As he says his prayer, he falls onto the water. The ripples that are created send his prayers down the river.

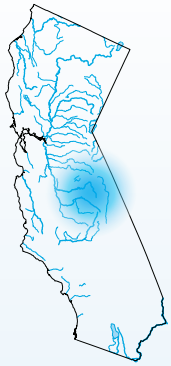
It is now mid-September. The Klamath River is warm and fish are near the mouth of the river, in the estuary, and waiting for the trigger that will start the fall run.

As the priest has completed his daily journey, made his prayers for the salmon, and returned to the dance ground, he stands and presides over the New Year's dance. Just after dark, the dance begins.

Behind the line of dancers facing the priest, suddenly there appears a light on the mountain. It's a fire, actually. It's not just a little fire; it is a lot of fire. For three days prior, six young men have been on top of the mountain, preparing for the fire. At the moment when darkness sets in, on the darkest night, the fire is pushed off the mountain and rolls down the hill. It sets the entire face of the mountain ablaze.

Only a week before, the same ritual was practiced about eight miles down the river, at another one of our world renewal ceremonial places. A month before that, the same ritual occurred up the river.

These fires burn from that time until the fall rains extinguish them. They burn and they crawl across huge areas of the landscape, creating necessary openings, killing the acorn weevils. At the same time, the inversion from the smoke from all of these fires sets into the valleys along the river – cooling the Klamath River by 2-3 degrees, triggering the fall run of salmon.



Dunlap Band of Mono

Dunlap, CA

Storyteller:
Dirk "Hutchama" Charley

Working with Hootchie

When I was around 8 years old, I spent my summer vacation with my grandparents, John and Annie Charley, in Dunlap, CA. My sister, Renee, and I always had a great time and we felt very lucky to be with them.

My Hootchie and Kunoo (grandma and grandpa) were always busy working around the ranch or somewhere in Dunlap and we would be right there with them helping out. It was a special day when Hootchie would take us to the creek to go to "work." We would walk across the field and would stop off at the usual places to gather sourberries and sourberry sticks. Then we would eventually come to the first stop along the creek where she would put me to "work."

I would go find a stick pole, string a hook, line and sinker, catch some grasshoppers, and begin catching some food, like a fat bluegill or a tasty trout. Hootchie would be working on her sticks, keeping an eye on me. I would catch what I could and give it to Hootchie.

After a while we would go upstream and harvest other things along the way like wild onions or watercress and maybe catch more fish. Sometimes I would catch a turtle and a couple of frogs along the way.

Finally we would arrive at our favorite swimming hole, the Falls. It was a special place with lots of granite falls, slides, potholes, and a nice sandy beach to boot! So we would again get set up to do some "work." After fishing the place out, we would swim, swim, swim!

Other Indian people would show up with more kids and pretty soon we had a nice little crowd. Lots of laughter, and the elders would be smiling and laughing at us going wild. We would have lunch there too and eat torts, biscuits and beans. Eventually we would get ready to leave but before we left, Hootchie would tell me to hop in one of the potholes, which was fairly deep for me (over my head) and do some more "work."

The pothole would be full of minnows, so many swirling around me like sardines in the ocean; a silvery mass of small fish. Hootchie would hand me her sieve basket and tell me to scoop them up. I would slide in and dip the basket into the water and when I lifted it up it, had about 20-30 minnows flipping around! I would dump the basket

into Hootchie's long dress and she would take it up to a fish bag and dump it in. I would continue my "work" and catch another batch and she would load them up again. Finally Hootchie would be happy and tell me to come on out.

Then we began the long, hot, uphill walk out of the Falls and across the field in my soaking wet pants and muddy feet. When we got back to the house I would get to "work" again. She would start me cleaning the fish and she would set me up with how to clean the pile of minnows. She told me to rinse them off, squish their little guts out and then rinse them off again. After I cleaned the whole pile I would bring them to Hootchie. She would smile at me, place a handful of them in a pan full of flour, shake them up and then drop them into a frying pan full of hot grease. They would fry up nice and golden crispy! She would then take them out, set them aside to drain and cool off. When they were ready she would give me a taste. They were like French fries and tasted so good!

This was a typical good day of "work" with Hootchie and I was a pretty happy kid.

Annie Charley (aka Hootchie) courtesy of Dirk Charley

Kumeyaay

Included in *2013 San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, Appendix 4-A: Tribal Water Stories of Coastal Southern California*

Posted on *www.kumeyaay.com/kumeyaa-religions-and-legends.html.*

Originally published in *Indian legends of the Cuyamaca Mountains*, 1914, by Mary Elizabeth Johnson, as told to her by Maria Alto, a Kumeyaay of the Cuyamaca mountains.

In-yar'en Ah-ha' (No Eyes in Water)

A spring that rises in the edge of the river flat at Descanso is pointed out by the Indians as one in which dwells a bad spirit. The following tale concerns its evil power.

All night long those who were awake heard the uncanny screams of *Kwin Mari'* (Blind Baby), who dwelt in the bewitched spring of *In-yar'en Ah-ha'* (No Eyes in Water), which oozed from the muddy bank and trickled down a sedgy flat to the river. Sharp, distressing sounds they were, like the cries of a frightened baby, and left a shuddering fear in the hearts of all who listened in the little village of *Pilch 'oom-wa* (White as Ashes).

This village, so called because nearly every morning the frost caused the ground to appear as though powdered with ashes, was just west of the river, and so near the evil spring that the piercing wails penetrated the remotest *'ewaa* (house).

Old women and fearless men listened with bated breath; young mothers clasped their little ones closer in shivering fear, thinking how they might perchance have been born under the blight of *Kwin Mari'*; those dear women, who were living in daily hope of giving a beautiful, brave manchild to their people, cowered in agony on their pallets of fur, drawing the soft robes closer about their heads to deaden the shrill cries.

All who heard know that the spirit of *Kwin Ma-ri'* was seeking a victim. Even the children knew that it could cast a spell over the mother before her little one entered the world, which would seal its eyes to earthly sight forever. So throughout the night they lay in waking dread.

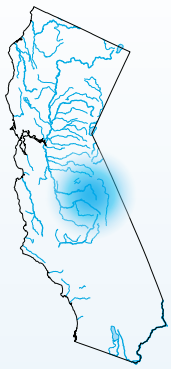
As the first gray line of dawn pushed up through the blackness of the night the cries ceased, and a strange woman crept into the village faintly calling for help.

Eagerly the people succored her; and when her strength returned she told how those in her own village had been killed, she alone escaping.

She spoke of how, after wandering about for several days, she had heard in the night the screams of a baby in distress and set out at once to find it. Stumbling in the dark, over rocks and thorny brush, she at last entered an open space soft under foot with the touch of new grown grass. As she drew nearer and nearer to the sounds, she reached a bank, mucky and wet. Here she stooped down to pick up the baby, thinking she had found it, but her hands plunged into a pool of water instead, and, as the sharp cries rose again from her very feet, she fell back, paralyzed with fear.

Not until dawn had she been able to move. Then she crawled to the nearest shelter, which she saw rising ghost-like on the hill before her. Little did she know what had befallen her, but the people, who well knew, kept her with them caring for her tenderly till her little one was born.

Only after she had seen how tightly closed were his tiny eyelids, resisting all efforts to open them, did they tell her of *Kwin Ma-ri'*, dwelling in the bewitched spring of the *In-yar' en Ah-ha'*, and how it had the power, could it but touch the mother, of blinding her unborn babe.



Bishop Paiute

Bishop/Owens Valley

Storyteller:
Tom Watterson
(aged 80-90)

Transcribed by:
Lee Warlie

Frederick S. Hulse ,
Inyo and Mono County
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Raymond Andrews
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Coyote Goes Fishing

Wolf always had his own idea of doing things. Like fishing.

One day, Wolf told Coyote his idea of how to go about fishing. "First procure a plant called a *Su-na-u-be*. Fix it so you can wear it around your waist, then go into the water about waist deep. Make a round-about walk in the water. When you complete the round, come out of the water and you will notice fish all over this plant. Go on the bank and unload them in a basket and bring them home."

Coyote followed Wolf's instructions and saw how easy it was. But instead of going home, he prepared to go into the water for a second time.

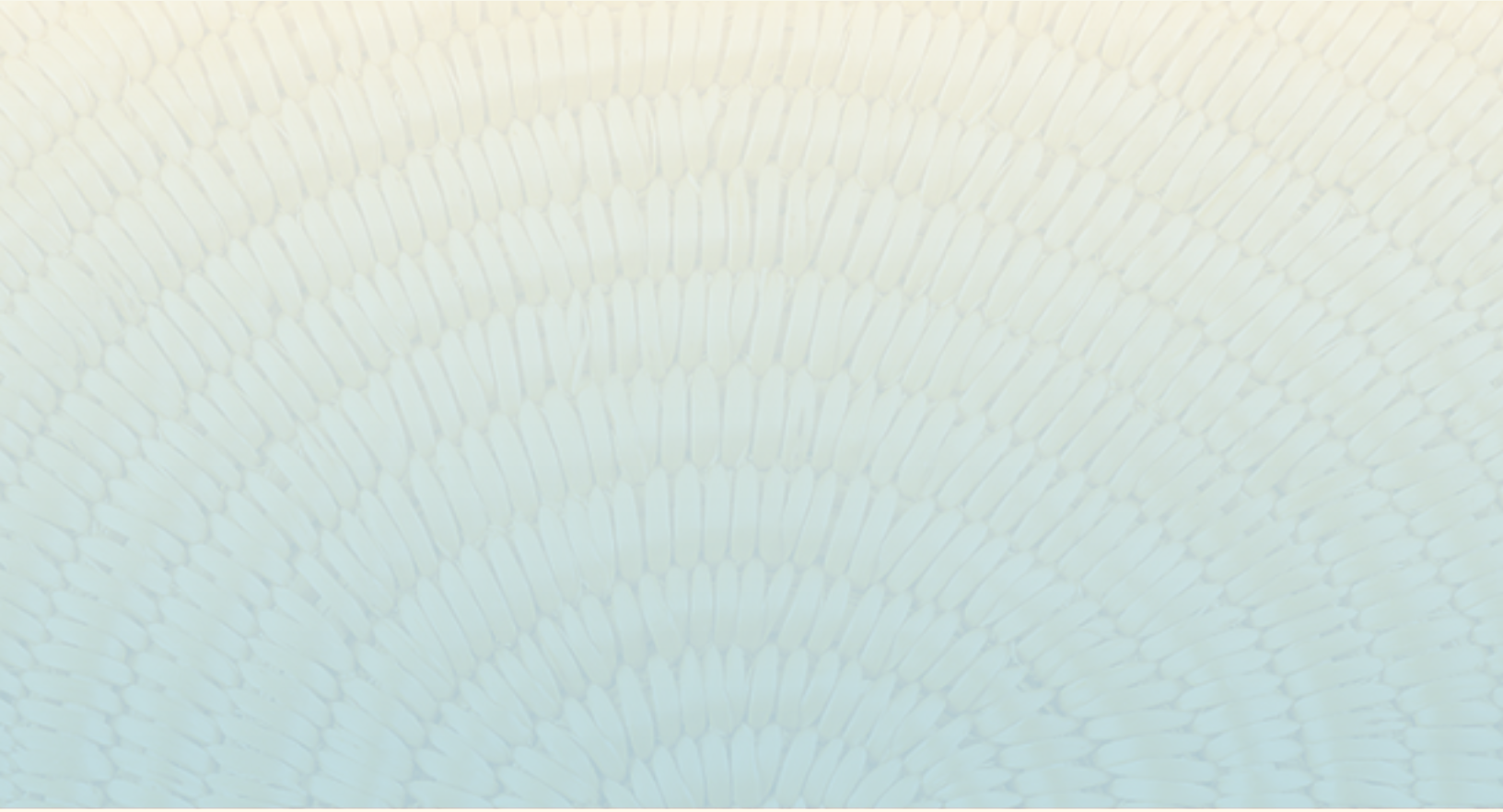
He went in, but when he came out the second time, there were no fish on the plant around his waist.

Wolf looked at the empty plant around Coyote's waist. "Is that all your fish?"

Coyote looked around for his first catch of fish, but there were no fish anywhere. The first fish had disappeared from his basket.

He did not get any fish that day.

Probably now if Coyote did not get involved, then ignore Wolf's instructions, the Indians would still be fishing with this plant, *Su-na-u-be*.

Front cover photos courtesy of Raymond Andrews, Dirk Charley, and DWR Photography Lab.

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