

Appendix

This appendix contains the oral narratives featured in this study. These narratives have been taken from the public domain in their transcribed English form. Narratives from Pete Martin are featured in Victor Barnouw's *Wisconsin Chippewa Myths and Tales and Their Relation to Chippewa Life* (1977: 132-135). Those from Norval Morriseau come from the chapter "The Ojibway Water Beings and Demigods of the Nipigon Area" in his memoir *Legends of My People: The Great Ojibway* (1965). The tradition of Dan Hopkins can be found on Indiana University's "Arikara Traditional Narratives" page by Alfred Morsette (2012). Finally, the 1836 version of the myth by John Russell is taken from the Madison County general website of Illinois.

The Underwater Lion

Collected by Robert Ritzenthaler at Court Oreilles in 1942

Narrator: Pete Martin (Chippewa)

There was a big lake; Indians lived on both sides of it. There was a big island of mud in the center, and if anyone wanted to go to the other village across the lake, they would have to paddle around the edge of the lake. If they tried to go straight across, something would happen to them. A bad *manido* lived there in the island.

One day there was a medicine dance across the lake, and people started around the lake in their canoes. Two women started later, after the others had gone. They were sisters-in-law. One of them was rather foolish. She was steering in the stern and headed straight across. The other warned her not to do it, but in vain. The first girl had a little cedar paddle with her. She never left it out of her sight – always took it along, even when she went out gathering wood. She held it but did not use it for paddling. As they got to the middle, they crossed the mud, and in the center of the mud was a hole of clear water. The water was swirling around the hole, and as they started to cross it, a lion came out of the middle and switched his tail across the boat, trying to turn it over. The girl picked up her little paddle and hit the lion's tail with it, saying, "Thunder is striking you." The paddle cut off the lion's tail, and the end dropped into the boat. When they picked it up, it was a solid piece of copper about two inches thick. They watched the lion running away through the mud, and the steerer laughed hard. She said, "I scared him. He won't bother us again." When they got across, the girl gave the piece of copper to her father, and he got rich through having it. The copper had certain powers. People would give her father a blanket just for a tiny piece of that copper. They would take that bit for luck in hunting and fishing, and some just kept it in their homes to bring good luck.

Comments: This tale is reminiscent of the two girls on Leech Lake, but the outcome is very different. In the former story a girl drowns and is carried to the bottom of the lake because she wondered why it was called Leech Lake. In this story, however, a bold girl gets the upper hand over a powerful underwater spirit and even laughs at him. One never knows who has power or how much.

An important Indian dichotomy was between the birds of the sky and underwater animals. There was a kind of feud believed to exist between these two classes, especially

between the thunderbirds and snakes, although thunderbirds were also enemies of underwater panthers, lions, or lynxes, termed *micipijin*, which were said to be made partly of copper. These may refer to pumas or cougars (which can swim), found in the Great Lakes region until fifty or more years ago. The name for the animal given in these stories is the term supplied by the narrator or interpreter. The two underwater kings whom Wenebojo kills in the origin myth are not identified with any animal species in our version, but in some other versions they are said to be underwater panthers. In this tale, as well as in some others, the animal is identified as a lion. Selwyn Dewdney has suggested that wherever British influence penetrated in North America, the Indians must have noted representations of the British lion on coins, treaty documents, and so on, and they may have asked what it was. On being told that it was a lion, the Indian might thereupon have identified this beast with *micipijin*, or Missipeshu, to use Dewdney's term. This example may account for the widespread use of the term "lion" for this underwater creature (Dewdney, 1975, 125).

Creatures of the underwater class were feared by the Chippewa. One should reject such spirits, if they appeared in a dream or a vision (see Landes, 1968, 31). Such spirits as underwater panthers have not been seen much since the coming of the white man, Tom Badger explained to me, because underwater creatures are afraid of thunder and other loud noises. "When they use dynamite or blast canals and things like that, those things go away. They go underground somewhere," he said.

The Horned Snake

Collected by Robert Ritzenthaler at Court Oreilles in 1942

Narrator: Pete Martin (Chippewa)

There was an old fellow who knew some bad medicine. He was a drummer with the Medicine Dance and was always using his drum. Once he went with his drum and his runner and camped on a sandbar in Gurnoe Swamp. He started to drum and call on a big snake, in order to get bad medicine. After a while there was a sound like water coming through, and then water started to come up through a hole and filled the swamp and caused a big foaming whirlpool. The big snake stuck his head out of the water. He was as big as around as a log and had horns. The fellow cut a piece of flesh out of the snake with his knife and gave it to his runner to put away. He also took a piece from under each horn. He cut the snake just as if it was butter. This was used as bad medicine by this fellow, who caused many people to die just by wishing they would die, no matter how far away they were. He would just think that the person should die, and he would. This happened a long time ago.

The Mide Priest and the Snake

Collected by Robert Ritzenthaler at Court Oreilles in 1942

Narrator: Pete Martin

There was a Mide priest who began to save blankets for the Medicine Dance. He saved up for two years and then told people at the feast that he was going after medicine. His runner

was away, so he took his daughter along up to Big Sugar Bush near Indian Post. Here there was a tiny lake with black water in it. He left his daughter on the hill, went down to the lake, put his blankets on the shore, and started to drum and sing. The water started rising, and soon the blankets were in the water, and he had to move back. He moved back several times until he was almost back to where his daughter was sitting. Then he took out some medicine, chewed some, and sprinkled it on the edge of the water. Then it stopped coming up. The fellow then made a knife out of cedar, and when the big snake came up, he took this knife and cut some flesh – very easily – from under the horns... This fellow was good and said as he took the flesh that he didn't want to use it to harm anyone, but only to bring good luck in hunting, trapping, and so on. I've used this stuff myself; it was good stuff. I always had good luck, but I had to stop using it, because the old woman who cooked my meat always had to rub some powdered medicine on her hands before she could use it. I was afraid my wife would forget some time. So I gave the medicine away.

The Ojibway Water Beings and Demigods of the Nipigon Area

Contributor: Norval Morriseau, 1965

My ancestor, my great-great-grandfather four generations ago, whose name was Little Grouse, had a medicine dream concerning an offering rock where the water demigod Misshipeshu, in the form of a huge cat, spoke to him and advised him to put on the rock a sacred sign made out of onaman, the Ojibway sacred sand. It was in the summer, and the water demigod helped my great-great-grandfather to put its sign on the walls of the cliffs. From then on, until thirty years ago, Indians of that area offered gifts to Misshipeshu.

In those days only the Ojibway Indians were at Lake Nipigon, there was no white man and everything was quiet. Maybe this is the main reason all water beings were seen so freely. But when the white men came and brought with them fish nets, motorboats, airplanes and railroads, these beings, the Ojibway believe, moved to a quieter place. Ojibway Indians of Lake Nipigon had an offering rock erected to this huge cat. Offerings of copper pails were thrown into the water and black dogs as well as white dogs, decorated in the very best, were offered alive to the water god for it to eat. In the time of the early traders, traps, guns and firewater, as well as great amounts of tobacco, were also put into the water. This was done once a year around June, in order not to offend the water god and to bring good luck to all those who believed in these offerings. Canoes formed a circle at the offering rock, as these rites took place on the water.

This huge cat is believed by the Ojibway to be white in colour, with horns, and very powerful. It is believed to live in the water but why a cat lives in the water, or where it lived, is not known. There is another big demigod of the same cat family who was considered very evil, but was a spirit. If anyone dreamed of this big water demigod at the time of fasting it was believed to bring misfortune, not to the dreamer but to his children. For this cat had to be pleased; it lived on human flesh or souls, but also accepted offerings of white pups about six months old to replace human souls. These offerings, however, were made very seldom, for this demigod was never demanding.

This big water god, or spirit, knew both good and evil. It all depended on what kind of nature an Indian had. If he were good then he would have the power to do good. If he were bad then he was given power to do bad. But the true water god, the white one in colour, always brought good luck to all who respected him.

The last offerings were made to the demigod at Lake Nipigon about thirty years ago. Now the offering rock is bare, for the water god Misshipeshu moved away.

At one time Misshipeshu, the water demigod, lived at Lake Superior. One day in the late summer two Ojibway Indians, man and wife, with their little baby, came upon a big beach and both felt hungry. The Indian said to his wife, "I will go into the great forest to hunt some partridge, as they are plentiful, and you, my wife, gather some firewood. Leave our baby at the canoe side."

About half an hour later both returned to find their baby gone. By the shores of Lake Superior paw prints were seen and they were Misshipeshu's prints. The baby had been taken, cradle and all, into the water and into the underwater caves. What could the poor Indians do? Despite the loss of their child the Indian spoke, "I will play my medicine drum and ask the thunderbirds to destroy the cave, including Misshipeshu."

From the heavens appeared a great thunderbird that threw lightning into the caves and rocks. Misshipeshu was forced to come out. As the demigod was about to leave, the thunderbird struck the ground and Misshipeshu died from the lightning. 31

The Young Man Who Became a Snake and the One Pitied By the Thunderbirds (Dan Hopkins)

Narrator: Dan Hopkins, 2012

Now I am going to tell about them – young men – when they went around, when they went around hunting.

When they went around, - then they lay on top – as they were looking at things.

Then they saw them, buffalos.

There there was a herd yonder, as they watched them.

Then they watched them.

"What are we going to do – for us to get close to them – buffalos those?"

While they lay on top – the buffalos – then they began to disappear.

Then they all disappeared, the buffalos.

These young men, they watched them.

"Let's go, where they disappeared."

There then they went.
Then they arrived.
There was a hole there.
Dirt was dropping down.
It was a big one, where the hole was.

Then they went down, - and – they got to the base.
Over there, there were trees all around.
Where the trees were as they went in the trees as they looked at things, it was a (different) country.
There, as they went around, after they had gone in the woods, “Now let’s go home!
And we will tell about it when we arrive.”

And then they came up with it.
When they came up it, there was around it a snake as (big as) the hole was.
Where they went up, - there was a head bordering it.
Back – then they went down the bank there.

Then they began to gather it, wood.
After they gathered it, then they brought them up.
Then they put them down, here where it lay, the snake.
Then they put it around it.

They set it afire.

Again then they went down the bank – there – as they went about in the woods, as they went about in the woods.
“Now truly it must have burned.”
They came up and then there were coals after it had burned.
One – the he began to eat it.
- Then he began to eat it.
“Surely, it tastes good!”
The other one, he didn’t want it: “Surely, it’s not good.”
The other one, he began to eat it.
Then they came.
There when they were coming, they stayed overnight.
After it became daylight, after he got up, this young man, then his feet were spotted.
“Hey – look – something has happened to me!
Hey, it is good.
I will go around – I will go in the village bare footed.”

Then they came.
Then they came.
Again, then they stayed overnight.

When it became daylight, the way extended farther (up) there on the knees where the legs had become spotted.

“And I will go around – bare legged there I will walk in the village.”

Then they came.

Then they came.

Again then they stayed overnight.

Now – again – when it became daylight, the way extended farther (up) there where the legs had become spotted.

“Now I will go around naked.

I will walk in the village naked.”

Again there then they came.

It became dark.

When it became daylight, there he lay a bull snake after his having become.

Then he became a snake.

Then he said: “Now take me where there is water!”

Then he began to take him, when he was taking him, where there was water.

(To) the east – he must have faced – as he lay in the water.

He said: “Take me out!

It is not good.

Take me out!

Turn me to face west!”

Then he laid him facing west.

And that is what he was told.

Then he said: “Whatever you want to do, you should come here.”

Yet then he began to go around the young man.

As he was going around, as he was going around, wherever it was its being a hill.

Then he lay down his sleeping.

His sleeping then he lay down.

And then he saw them – eagles, - whatever they were – birds – their sitting there.

Then they flew up with him where it had its in (the nest) child.

When it became daylight, there it was in (the nest).

And there then that is where they talked to him birds holy.

Then they said: “Ours don’t grow up children here, this one in the water, its eating them up.
We picked you up.
It is for you, for you to shoot it.”

Then they gave arrows to him, holy arrows.
“When it opens its mouth, shoot it in the mouth!”

But they were flying, as they were flying around, their bringing it for him to eat.

Then the water rose, the water rising where the nest was.
Then it came up on the water, a water monster.
But these flying they were shooting it, their shooting it.

Then it arrived where the nest was after it came out of the water.
Then this is what he did : - as it opened its mouth then he shot it in the mouth.
Then he killed it.

Then the water receded again.
Then it lay there on dry land in the distance.

Now – here the young man – then they talked to him.
They blessed him.

Now then he began to go around.
Now but that one the water his brother his friend then he knew.
When he came, when he came – it was not good – his friend when he would spy on him.
Now whatever it was its having horns, then he tied the horns whatever they were.
Then the horns protruded from the water.

As he came there, - as he came there, - then he swooped down ‘that I kill him’ – his (snake)
brother. As he did that – then he caught him.
Then he took him underwater.
Then he began to change him (back to a human) his working over him, his working over him.
Now he changed him.

When he changed him, - but – he did not change him in the eyes.
It continued – lightning – its occurring, and he had his eyes tied as he would sit.

Then he sat down in the lodge.
When he sat, then his eyes were tied.
And he did it: when he took it off, the lightning it had not changed in the eyes.

It continued.

The Piasa: An Indian Tradition of Illinois

Author: Professor John Russell, 1836

No part of the United States, not even the highlands of the Hudson, can vie, in wild and romantic scenery, with the bluffs of Illinois on the Mississippi, between the mouths of the Missouri and Illinois rivers. On one side of the river, often at the water's edge, a perpendicular wall of rock rises to the height of some hundred feet. Generally, on the opposite shore is a level bottom or prairie of several miles in extent, extending to a similar bluff that runs parallel with the river. One of these ranges commences at Alton, and extends for many miles along the left bank of the Mississippi. In descending the river to Alton, the traveler will observe, between that town and the mouth of the Illinois, a narrow ravine through which a small stream discharges its waters into the Mississippi. This stream is the Piasa. Its name is Indian, and signifies, in the Illini, 'The bird which devours men.' Near the mouth of this stream, on the smooth and perpendicular face of the bluff, at an elevation which no human art can reach, is cut the figure of an enormous bird, with its wings extended. The animal which the figure represents was called by the Indians, 'the Piasa.' From this is derived the name of the stream.

The tradition of the Piasa is still current among the tribes of the Upper Mississippi, and those who have inhabited the valley of the Illinois, and is briefly this:

Many thousand moons before the arrival of the pale faces, when the great Magalonyx and Mastodon, whose bones are now dug up, were Chief Ouatoga and the Piasa Bird still living in the land of green prairies, there existed a bird of such dimensions that he could easily carry off in his talons a full-grown deer. Having obtained a taste for human flesh, from that time he would prey on nothing else. He was artful as he was powerful, and would dart suddenly and unexpectedly upon an Indian, bear him off into one of the caves of the bluff, and devour him. Hundreds of warriors attempted for years to destroy him, but without success. Whole villages were nearly depopulated, and consternation spread through all the tribes of the Illini.

Such was the state of affairs when Ouatoga, the great chief of the Illini, whose fame extended beyond the Great Lakes, separating himself from the rest of his tribe, fasted in solitude for the space of a whole moon, and prayed to the great spirit, the Master of Life, that he would protect his children from the Piasa.

On the last night of the fast, the Great Spirit appeared to Ouatoga in a dream, and directed him to select twenty of his bravest warriors, each armed with a bow and poisoned arrows, and conceal them in a designated spot. Near the place of concealment, another warrior was to stand in open view, as a victim for the Piasa, which they must shoot the instant he pounced upon his prey.

When the chief awoke in the morning, he thanked the Great Spirit, and returning to his tribe, told them his vision. The warriors were quickly selected and placed in ambush as directed. Ouatoga offered himself as the victim. He was willing to die for his people. Placing himself in open view on the bluffs, he soon saw the Piasa perched on the cliff, eying his prey. The chief drew up his manly form to his utmost height, and planting his feet firmly upon the earth, he

began to chant the death-song of an Indian warrior. The moment after, the Piasa arose into the air, and swift as the thunder-bolt, darted down on his victim. Scarcely had the horrid creature reached his prey before every bow was sprung and every arrow was sent quivering to the feather into his body. The Piasa uttered a fearful scream, that sounded far over the opposite side of the river, and expired. Ouatoga was unharmed. Not an arrow, not even the talons of the bird had touched him. The Master of Life, in admiration of Ouatoga's deed, had held over him an invisible shield.

There was the wildest rejoicing among the Illini, and the brave chief was carried in triumph to the council house, where it was solemnly agreed that, in memory of the great event in their nation's history, the image of the Piasa should be engraved on the bluff.

Such is the Indian tradition. Of course, I cannot vouch for its truth. This much, however, is certain – that the figure of a huge bird, cut in the solid rock, is still there, and at a height that is perfectly inaccessible. How and for what purpose it was made I leave it for others to determine. Even at this day an Indian never passes the spot in his canoe without firing his gun at the figure of the Piasa. The marks of the balls on the rock are almost innumerable.

Near the close of March of the present year (1836), I was induced to visit the bluffs below the mouth of Illinois River, above that of the Piasa. My curiosity was principally directed to the examination of a cave, connected with the above tradition, as one of those to which the bird had carried his human victims. Preceded by an intelligent guide, who carried a spade, I set out on my excursion. The cave was extremely difficult of access, and at one point in our progress, I stood at an elevation of one hundred and fifty feet on the perpendicular face of the bluff, with barely room to sustain one foot. The unbroken wall towered above me, while below was the river. After a long and perilous climb, we reached the cave, which was about fifty feet above the surface of the river. By the aid of a long pole placed on a projecting rock, and the upper end touching the mouth of the cave, we succeed in entering it. Nothing could be more impressive than the view from the entrance to the cavern. The Mississippi was rolling in silent grandeur beneath us. High over our heads a single cedar tree hung its branches over the cliff, and on one of the dead, dry limb was seated a bald eagle. No other sign of life was near us, a Sabbath stillness rested on the scene. Not a cloud was visible on the heavens; not a breath of air was stirring. The broad Mississippi was before us, calm and smooth as a lake. The landscape presented the same wild aspect it did before it had met the eye of the white man. The roof of the cavern was vaulted, and the top was hardly less than twenty feet high. The shape of the cavern was irregular, but so far as I could judge, the bottom would average twenty by thirty feet. The floor of the cavern throughout its whole extent was one mass of human bones. Skulls and other bones were mingled in the utmost confusion. To what depth they extended I was unable to decide, but we dug to the depth of 3 or 4 feet in every part of the cavern, and still we found only bones. The remains of thousands must have been deposited here. How and by whom, and for what purpose, it impossible to conjecture.