

BUCKLAND ESKIMO MYTHS¹

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Briefly, the Buckland Eskimo, the Kangyikmiut, may be characterized as seasonal migrants between the inland and coastal areas. About nine months of each year, September through early June, are spent up river fishing and hunting. The most permanent Buckland village is situated outside the down river or northern margin of spruce timber. Here, in the fall and early winter, the inhabitants formerly lived in semi-subterranean, moss-covered houses with a central fireplace. Frame houses built of lumber imported from the United States have now largely replaced the aboriginal style house.

Later, usually in January, the Kangyikmiut moved up river to their camp at the caribou corral. From there, hunting parties ranged widely over the interior of Seward Peninsula in search of caribou, small game and fish. Shelter on hunting trips was provided by the "itchalik", a hemispherical skin tent supported by a framework of arched willows. The "itchalik" was also used as a dwelling through late winter and the spring and summer months.

When spring neared, the Kangyikmiut moved gradually down river, stopping at fishing and hunting camps on the way. By June, they reached Eschscholtz Bay, the easternmost extension of Kotzebue Sound. In early summer they fished and hunted sea mammals, especially the white whale (beluga). In July and August, most of the people went to Kotzebue for trading and entertainment, but by late August they were ready to go up the Buckland River in skin boats to their fall fishing sites.

This semi-nomadic existence was somewhat changed by the introduction of the domestic reindeer into Alaska in the late 19th century. Along with the reindeer came more private exploitation and federal maladministration which adversely affected the native culture. On the credit side, the people's general economic level was raised by the abundance of food, warm clothing, and materials that the reindeer provided. However, the collapse of the reindeer industry in the 1930's and 1940's mean economic disaster for the Kangyikmiut.

The gold rush largely passed by the Buckland River area, for prospectors moved on when they found no extensive gold deposits. At approximately the same time, missionaries representing the Friends Church arrived. Buckland native religion with its overt manifestations and ceremonial complexes fell before the Christian doctrine and changing ways. Then, too, remnants of the earlier material culture were largely replaced by western manufactured goods. It should be emphasized that the influences of alien culture, either on an intellectual or material level, were not a recent phenomenon. Since the middle of the

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19th century, Russian influences from St. Michael and elsewhere were strong. Numerous foreign explorers and commercial whalers who visited or wintered at such places as Cape Prince of Wales and Point Hope also exerted new influences. Before the Europeans and Americans came, there had been extensive trade and social intercourse, direct and indirect, with the Eskimo and possibly the Chuckchee of Siberia. In addition, the Kangyikmiut were in frequent and friendly contact with the neighboring Athapascan speaking Indians, namely those living about the Koyukuk or lower Yukon rivers. Of course, they also interchanged ideas freely with other Eskimo groups in northwest Alaska.

Buckland Eskimo population in recent years has been about one hundred inhabitants. It is probable that the Kangyikmiut have decreased in number since their first contact with the whites, for epidemics, such as the influenza outbreak in 1918, have killed many people. The incidence of active tuberculosis is high, as elsewhere in western Alaska, and deaths from this and other causes are frequent, as is confirmed by the large number of recent burials on the hillside at Elephant Point.

Considering the small number of people at Buckland, the writer feels that he was fortunate in obtaining as his principal informant, Andrew Sunno, a Kangyikmiut reportedly born about 1860. With one exception, the myths given were told by Andrew. As Andrew has also lived in the Unalakleet-St. Michael region on Norton Sound, he included some stories from that area. The translator was Jessie Ralph, a Selawik Eskimo woman who was born about 1898; she also related the story, "He Met a Giant Bird".

The recording procedure used was for Andrew to speak in Eskimo for several minutes and then Jessie translated it into English. Later, each story was reread to the informant, who understood English quite well but chose to speak through a translator. The precise wording of the translator has not been retained throughout the myths, but it is hoped that the original meaning is unaltered.

The informant's comments and explanations are enclosed in parentheses; the writer's remarks are in brackets.

A MAN, A CARIBOU, AND A WOLF

The Buckland people were starving. Early one morning a hunter went out to look for game. He didn't have any breakfast, because there wasn't anything to eat. All day long the hunter walked over the hills. He went down into a creek and then up on the next ridge. He stopped on a high place to look around the country. Over on a hillside he saw something move. When the thing came closer the hunter could see that it was a caribou. It was running away from something. The caribou didn't turn when it saw the man. It came straight toward him.

Caribou came right up to the man and said, "A wolf is chasing me. If you hide me, I'll give you something really good." Then Caribou hid himself behind the man. Soon a wolf came running along following the fresh caribou tracks. The wolf ran up to the man. Wolf pulled back his headskin and showed his human face. Wolf said, "Give me that

caribou. I smell him around here somewhere." Caribou put his mouth near the man's ear and whispered, "Oh, don't tell the wolf I am here."

Wolf talked to the man for a long time, trying to find out where the caribou was hiding. He told the man he could have anything he asked for, if he would tell where the caribou was. Caribou whispered again, "Don't believe what the wolf says. His presents will disappear as soon as he gets what he wants. He is a deceiver." Finally Wolf got tired. He pulled his headskin down over his face and went away.

When Wolf was gone, Caribou came out in front of the man and thanked him for keeping his word. Then Caribou started to paw away the snow and moss. Wherever he dug below the moss there was a cache of good food, like beluga, muktuk, and ugruk meat. This was Caribou's gift to the man who saved his life.

For the rest of his life that Buckland man didn't go hungry. He fed his family and relatives even when there wasn't any game in the country. All he had to do when he needed food was to go to the hills. He only had to dig up the moss, and there was his food.

A GIANT WORM LIVED NEAR ELIM

Tirichuk was a giant worm who lived near Elim. The worm lived in a cave in a rocky cliff. He used to lie with his body in an inside room and with his head at the cave opening. Skin boats sometimes went by in front of the cliff. If Tirichuk was hungry he sent out two long feelers and dragged in the boat and the people, and ate them.

One Elim family had an only son, who got eaten by the giant worm. Usually the boy took his kayak far offshore out of the worm's reach, but once he was careless and came too close.

The boy's father made up his mind to kill Tirichuk. He made a big, strong harpoon with a sharp end blade. Then he walked to the cliff. He crawled up under the hole where Tirichuk lived. The giant worm couldn't see him because the rocks hung out at that place. When Tirichuk heard the man, he stretched his long body out across the beach. And when he did this the scales that covered his body were spread apart. The man saw his chance and stuck his big harpoon deep into Tirichuk's soft belly. Blood squirted out of the hole in his belly and Tirichuk swam out to sea in a hurry. Nobody has ever seen that Tirichuk since.

A TIME LONG AGO

A long time ago a lot of people were in a qaligi. Each person had sticking out from the middle of his forehead the snout of some kind of animal, like fox, wolverine, weasel, wolf, and others. Maybe those people came from animals.

A WOMAN BECOMES A BEAR

A woman really loved her husband, named Pisiksokhole. But he got sick and died. She wrapped his body in a kayak skin cover and took him to the burying place.

One day the woman was out walking when she met a redpoll, sitting on a willow branch. The little bird sang, "Pisiksokhole, he lives.

He is married, he is married." The bird told her where he was living. And sure enough when she went to the grave she saw that her husband had run away. The woman was full of hate and swore she would get even with Pisiksokhole.

Now the woman got ready for a trip. She soaked a light-colored brown bear skin and worked the skin until it was soft, then she put the animal skin over her own naked body. She put some wooden rods along her ribs. She started off across the country until she saw a village. There on a hillside she met Pisiksokhole and his new wife. That man didn't know the bear was really his first wife. He shot some arrows at the bear but didn't hurt it. Then the mad woman came up close to Pisiksokhole. She pulled back the bear snout and showed her face. Pisiksokhole didn't know what to do. He said, "Oh, won't you come and be my wife again?" The woman said she had already suffered enough on account of him. And then she jumped on him. She tore Pisiksokhole to pieces.

She tried to take off the bear skin, but it had dried, and it stuck to her skin. She became a bear and went south towards Nunivak.

Back at the time of the flu epidemic of 1918, a real old, toothless bear was killed near the Kobuk. Along the ribs of the old bear they found some rotten wooden sticks. So some people think that was the woman who changed into a bear.

That's all I remember. If you want to hear the real story you should go to St. Michael.

EAGLE AND YAKSHUK

There was a family with a daughter who wouldn't get married. A boy in another village heard about the girl and went to see her. He was dressed in his best spotted parka and sealskin pants. The girl's father and mother liked the boy as soon as they saw him. They thought he would make a good husband for their daughter. And they needed somebody to hunt for the family, because the father was too old to do much hunting. That boy wanted to get married, but the girl wouldn't talk to him. She wouldn't even look at him. Her father scolded her for being so foolish. The girl got mad. She took a wooden food bucket, put a little food in it, and started to go outside. Her mother was mad. She yelled after her daughter, "I hope the passage grows longer."

The mother's words made a strange thing happen. The passage stretched in front of the girl. No matter if she walked slow or fast, the light from the door didn't come closer. She walked and walked. She stopped to rest and walked some more. But the passage went on. Finally the girl was so tired that she lay down on the cold ground and slept. When she woke up she went on towards the light. She was very tired, but she kept on even after all her food was gone. Under her feet there was something that felt like small pebbles, all of the same size. Those really weren't stones, they were blue beads. The girl picked up a handful of the beads—enough for a necklace—and put them in her wooden bucket.

Now the light from the door got brighter. The girl finally came to the door opening. She had to wait until her eyes got used to the bright light.

Outside the tunnel there was a wide, clean ocean beach. When she looked back she saw that the tunnel came out at the face of a rocky cliff. Near the beach was a flat place with low willows here and there. There were some berries and greens good to eat. The girl ate some. When she was rested she built a small [conical, tent-like] house of driftwood poles. Pretty soon she felt hungry, so she walked around trying to find something to eat. She was surprised when she found behind some willows a fresh-killed caribou. The caribou was still warm, and blood was dripping from its nose. The girl didn't have a knife but she knew how to make one. She took her brass bracelet and pounded it flat with a hammerstone. She shaped the cutting edge by rubbing the brass against a stone. Soon she had a good knife. She skinned out the caribou and cut it up. Then she packed the meat to her house and sat down to wipe the blood from her hands. The meat was still warm and steaming, not good to eat. While the girl was sitting there, she looked down at the beach. She saw what seemed to be a seal, lying near the water. When she went to the place she found a dead ugruk. Blood was running out of its nose, just like the caribou. She cut up the ugruk. She ate some of the raw liver and intestine walls. Then she cooked some of the ugruk meat and ate. Next she dug up some moss and covered the house with it. She ate again, this time of caribou meat. That night she slept alone in her little house. In the morning she looked out at the ocean. The water was calm, but far away something flashed in the sunshine. She watched, and soon she could see a man paddling a kayak straight towards her.

That kayak came closer. The girl was afraid. She had no place to hide, so she went into her house and waited. The man in the kayak came ashore and put the kayak on the beach. She could see that he was middle-aged. He was dressed in gutskin hunting clothes. The man came right up to the girl's house and came inside. He didn't say anything. He just looked at her. Then he said, "I've come to get you." The girl picked up her things and followed the stranger to his kayak. She crawled feet-first into the kayak hole, so that when the man sat down her head was in his lap. As he paddled along she looked up at his face. Sticking out from the middle of his forehead was a bird's beak, a little less than two inches long. The beak shined like clean brass in the sunshine. Now the girl thought she would never see her family again. The stranger seemed to know what she was thinking. He began to sing while he paddled.

When the man was finishing his song, the kayak scraped against a sandy beach. They had come to an island. Up above the beach there was a house and two [elevated caches.] The man showed the house to the girl and told her to go and wait there for him. He said he was going hunting and asked her what kind of meat she wanted. She said that an ugruk would be all right. The man went in his kayak just a little offshore and harpooned an ugruk. The girl was sitting inside the doorway of the house all this time. She was afraid to go into the house.

That night they had supper and went to bed. He wanted to sleep with her but she didn't want to. Again the next morning he went out hunting in his kayak. He came back in a few hours with his kill.

Once before he went hunting the man told the girl not to go near the cache closest to the house. That made the girl wonder what was in the cache. When he was gone she walked over near the cache. She didn't see anything to be afraid of, so she walked closer; and then she saw something! Lots of women's hair was hanging down through the cracks in the cache floor. The girl ran back to the house. She was scared. She sat down and waited for the hunter to come back. Then a shadow fell on the floor in front of her. She looked up and saw a strange man standing at the edge of the smokehole. He had a beak like an eagle, instead of a real human nose. He was wearing a ground squirrel parka. The stranger said, "He is going to kill you, like he did those wives in the cache. Early tomorrow morning, after he has gone hunting, you should be ready to run away with me. When he asks what kind of meat you want, tell him a big, black whale. Then he will be gone for a long time." After he said this the man disappeared.

Soon the hunter came home. But this time he didn't go right to his sleeping place. He stopped and looked up at the smokehole. "It seems like you have been talking to somebody while I was gone," he said. The girl didn't say anything. The hunter kept asking her questions until she finally said, "Oh, two little birds were hopping around the smokehole and singing. I talked with one of the little birds and said I wanted wings, so I could fly." The man believed what she said and went over to his bed.

The girl was afraid and didn't sleep very well that night. Once she woke up when she heard some metal being sharpened. At the man's sleeping place a lamp was burning. He was hard at work, sharpening something. The girl raised her head a little bit so that she could see better, but the man heard her move and quickly blew out the lamp and acted like he was asleep. The girl was awake the rest of the night; the man was awake too, but he didn't light his lamp again.

Early in the morning the hunter got dressed and asked the girl what kind of animal she wanted that day. She remembered what the stranger had told her to say. She said, "I want a black whale." The man said that it would take all day to get a black whale. But anyway he left the island in his kayak.

As soon as the hunter was out of sight, the stranger wearing the squirrel parka came to the smokehole and told the girl to come outside. She went out. Standing there was a great eagle taller than a human being. The man had become an eagle.

Eagle told the girl to climb under his wing and find a hiding place under the feathers. The girl climbed up and spread apart the feathers. She crawled under the feathers and pulled them over her. Then Eagle flapped his wings and flew away with the girl. Eagle flew around and around, until he was far above the earth. For a while the girl knew that she was above her own village, but Eagle kept on flying.

It was all quiet until a loud voice came from the ocean below. That was the voice of the kayak hunter. When she looked down she saw that

the hunter had turned into Yakshuk, a giant sea bird with red and black feathers and a beak like a seagull's. Yakshuk sang a challenge to Eagle, "Go on and save yourself."

Eagle knew there would be a fight. He said to the girl, "Hang on to my feathers and keep yourself hidden." Then Eagle dived and the fight started. The girl held on as well as she could and closed her eyes. For a long time those two big birds fought. At last Eagle was the winner. As he flew away he said to the girl, "Spread open the feathers and look down." The girl saw the giant bird Yakshuk lying on the ocean. His wings were beating and his head was jerking, as he died. That was how Yakshuk died.

Eagle flew towards land. Finally he landed. The girl climbed down to the ground and looked around. She saw that the place was on top of a great high pillar of rock. The walls of the rock were so smooth and steep that no man or animal could climb them. On the flat place at the top there was a house and two caches. Two big old eagle skins were hanging outside the house.

Eagle told the girl to go into the house. Inside were two old, white-haired people, man and wife. They were Eagle's father and mother. The parents showed the girl where she was going to live, at Eagle's sleeping place. Eagle came home with a caribou. He took off his skin and became a man. They ate some of the fresh caribou. Then the girl went to bed with the eagle. The girl became Eagle's wife. She had two sons by him. Those boys had beaks like an eagle, in place of a human nose.

Life on the rock was lonely for Eagle's wife. Sometime she stood at the edge of the cliff, looking at the ground below. Once she asked Eagle what the color was that always covered the earth down below. Eagle said it was a great field of salmon berries that no one ever picked. Eagle put his wife on his back and carried her down to pick berries. She filled many caribou-stomach pokes full of berries.

Still Eagle's wife was homesick. Her father-in-law said, "I'm very tired, for all day and all night I hear some woman crying for her lost daughter." The old man told Eagle that he should take his wife home for a visit. Eagle began to get ready for the trip. He built a sled with runners of whole tree trunks, roots, limbs and all. On the bed of the sled he built an itchalik. He put a lot of food and many fine caribou skins on the sled. The skins were for trading with the coast people.

Eagle made sled harnesses for himself and his two sons. They put on their eagle skins. Eagle told his wife to go into the itchalik and stay there until he told her she could come out. He also told her not to look outside while they were traveling, because she would surely get scared and make trouble. Eagle and the boys were hitched and ready to go. The wife went into the itchalik and the sled started to move. It moved slowly at first, because it was so loaded. The sled scraped over the ground for a while, then it fell off into the air. The woman could hear the wing beat of the eagles, as they pulled the sled across the sky. Soon she could hear her children breathing hard. She was afraid they were almost tired out. So she started to raise the itchalik cover, to get a look. Eagle saw her. He turned his head and

told her not to look. His wife obeyed. She didn't say anything even if it hurt her when her children worked so hard.

It wasn't long before the sled touched the earth and stopped. Eagle told his wife to come out of the itchalik. She was happy when she saw her own country all around. There was a lake close by. She knew her village wasn't far away. Eagle gave his wife a pack of caribou skins to trade for ugruk skins and rawhide. Eagle and the boys didn't go home with her.

Outside her parent's home the woman saw only a few footprints in the snow. It was very quiet. She looked in through the door. She could see her father and mother sitting on either side of the fireplace. The old people's hair was all white and pulled back from their foreheads, because they had so often rubbed their heads in worry. Eagle's wife came in the house. When the mother saw her daughter she ran to her. They threw themselves into each other's arms and cried, because they were so happy. They sang a song and cried.

After they stopped crying the mother told about the hard times the family had been having. They had given everything away to people who helped them, because the father was too old to hunt. A man came in and the daughter asked him to go to the sled and bring home her things. A lot of sleds went out from the village. They could see where Eagle's sled had crossed the lake. There was a lot of food and skins to be hauled back. That woman's family was rich now. The woman traded the caribou skins for things that Eagle's family needed. They loaded those things on the giant sled. Eagle and his sons pulled the sled back to their home.

The woman stayed with her family the rest of the winter and the next spring and summer. In the fall she went home with Eagle to the house on top of the rock. The eagles later made many trading trips between their country and the woman's village.

Maybe there is some more to the story, but this is all I remember.

HE MET A GIANT BIRD

My husband's uncle one time met a giant bird when he was hunting inland. The bird dived at him, but the man shot arrows at it. An arrow hit the bird in one foot. The bird opened its claws. It was carrying a whole ugruk. The man got away.

HOW RAVEN GOT AND LOST A WIFE

There was a girl who didn't want to get married. She was good looking. Raven heard about that girl, and he went to her village. He took off his bird skin and hid it outside the qaligi. Now he was a young man. He went into the qaligi. The men in there were talking a lot about the girl who didn't like men. Raven listened so he could decide what to do. The more he heard, the more he wanted that girl. Pretty soon he had an idea.

Raven went outside the qaligi and looked around until he found a piece of seal intestine a little over a foot long. He tied shut one end of the gut. Then he picked up a human turd and stuffed it into the gut, and closed the open end. When everyone was asleep Raven went

to the girl's house. He sneaked in beside her on the sleeping platform. She was asleep. Raven pulled the full seal gut out of his inner parka, where he had put it to thaw. Raven untied one end of the gut; he raised the girl's bedding a little and squeezed the soft stuff out on her bed. Raven woke the girl and said, "See what a mess you made in your bed." The girl was ashamed. And when Raven acted like he was going to leave, she grabbed his hand and begged him not to tell anybody about her accident. Raven promised to keep her secret. The girl was so worried about her dirty bed that she didn't think to push Raven away. Raven slept with the girl that night. When the family got up the next morning, Raven was still in bed. The girl started to sew new clothes for Raven that same day. The girl's father liked his new son-in-law. So Raven stayed with the family.

Raven's wife fed him whenever he was hungry. But one day when Raven was standing all alone outside, he saw a fresh dog skin hanging from his father-in-law's cache. The warm sunshine was making the fat drip from the skin. The nice dog fat really made Raven hungry. Raven hurried and put on his old skin. Now he was a bird again. He pecked at the dog skin with his sharp beak, and soon the skin was torn to pieces. When Raven was full he took off his bird skin and went into the qaligi.

In a little while Raven's father-in-law came running into the qaligi. He was plenty mad. He said, "Some person with three toes has torn up my dog skin; all of you take off your mukluks to prove you aren't the one!" All the men but Raven lined up around the edge of the sleeping platforms so Raven's father-in-law could look at their bare feet. Raven stayed in back, but his father-in-law saw him there. He told Raven to come out and show his feet like the rest. Raven said he had five toes on each foot, just like any real human being, but it did Raven no good to argue. His father-in-law came right to him and pulled off one of his mukluks. Raven's feet had three toes!

"You are the one who ruined my dog skin!" shouted the father-in-law. And so Raven lost his wife.

ILYARUNIK

A family with four sons lived at Deering. All the children were little when their father died, but they had to help their mother take the father out of the house to the burying place. Pretty soon the mother died too. No one would help them bury their mother. Their mother's brother was afraid to touch her body. That uncle stood on the house roof and told the boys to lift the dead body up through the smokehole. A bunch of people came and watched the orphans try to lift the mother's body. Nobody would help them. The boys tried two times, but the body was too heavy for them. It fell back down on the floor. The boys tried again and this time they got the body up on the roof. The uncle told the boys to drag their mother to her grave.

The oldest orphan boy was called Ilyarunik. He didn't forget those people who laughed at him and his brothers. He wanted to grow up to be a strong man so he could get even with those people. The orphans

didn't starve. Their uncle gave them food. Ilyarunik grew up. Now he was almost a man, but he didn't forget who his enemies were.

After playing games one night Ilyarunik thought about one of his enemies. He went to that man and killed him with his own bare hands. Another time when they were playing games, a man made fun of Ilyarunik. So Ilyarunik killed him. He was so strong he only needed his hands to kill a man.

The boy's uncle was living with them. One day the uncle and Ilyarunik went out to the bird cliffs to gather eggs. Ilyarunik's uncle lowered him down the cliff on a rawhide line. Ilyarunik found a good place and stopped to pick up eggs. But when he pulled hard on the line, as a sign to be pulled up, the line fell down. It was lucky that Ilyarunik didn't fall off the rocks. Up above, the uncle looked over the edge and made excuses to himself for dropping the rope. He thought Ilyarunik must be dead, but he didn't even go down to see. He went back to the village. Ilyarunik was standing there on that narrow place. He thought maybe his uncle had tried to kill him.

Ilyarunik stayed on the cliff for hours. In the middle of the night he made up his mind. He wrapped the rope around his body. He was going to jump. He didn't care much if he got killed. He jumped out into the air—he spread his arms and sailed like a bird. When Ilyarunik hit the water he went under like a diving bird. He came up for air, then he started to swim towards Deering. He could swim like an ugruk. When Ilyarunik came home he smiled at everybody he met, even his uncle.

Now Ilyarunik was hunting seals and caribou. He fed his younger brothers. Later the uncle sent his brother Suluk to Tapqaq. The brothers, Kuvravuk and Nugruk, went up North.

One time Ilyarunik heard about the walrus skin that lived in a hole in the rocks at Cape Deceit. The big skin caught boats that came too close to the Cape. It ate the people who were in the boats. That didn't scare Ilyarunik. He took a hunting knife and swam to the place where the walrus skin lived. When he got there he saw the water moving. Then he saw that walrus skin. It came and wrapped itself around Ilyarunik, and they sank to the bottom of the water. Ilyarunik just pushed with his arms and pushed the skin off. He cut it to pieces. He killed that skin. Then Ilyarunik swam away deep under water.

Ilyarunik once heard Kuvravuk's voice. He said that Nugruk had been killed by the giant shrew, Ugrunukpuk. Suluk and Ilyarunik went to avenge their brother's death. Suluk went in his kayak. Suluk's kayak paddle had blades made from whale shoulder blades. Ilyarunik swam along beside his brother's kayak. The people at the village told them where Ugrunukpuk lived. They came to a lake inland. They saw Ugrunukpuk lying in the sun on the other side of the lake. Suluk paddled his kayak across the lake. Ilyarunik went around by land and came behind Ugrunukpuk. Suluk made a splash in the water with his paddle. Ugrunukpuk woke up and started after Suluk. Then Ilyarunik grabbed Ugrunukpuk's hind legs and held on. Ugrunukpuk swam after Suluk. He didn't even feel anybody hanging on his hind legs.

Suluk landed the kayak and jumped out. Suluk grabbed Ugrunukpuk's front legs. The two brothers pulled until they tore Ugrunukpuk to pieces. Then the brothers went home.

Ilyarunik killed one more Deering man before he went to live at Iyarovik [Chamisso Island]. Suluk was living at Tapqaq. He took all the best caribou skins away from the Tapqaq men when they came back from hunting inland. The people of Tapqaq were afraid of Suluk, but finally they got tired of him. One time they filled his kayak full of skins. When Suluk got in the kayak they put more on top of him, so he couldn't move. Then the men stuck him with spears and shot his body full of arrows. Ilyarunik went to Tapqaq to bury his brother. Then he killed some Tapqaq people to get even with them.

Ilyarunik swam back to Iyarovik. There was a place south of the island where the water was full of smelt. Ilyarunik could hardly swim through the fish, they were so thick. He put a stick at the place to mark it, but the ice took it away. Ilyarunik would have piled rocks there, only he couldn't swim and carry rocks too.

After Ilyarunik came back to Iyarovik he built a stone house and got a wife. Later he got another wife. The Tapqaq people came after Ilyarunik to kill him, but they couldn't get close to the island. When they came close Ilyarunik threw rocks and killed them. He could throw rocks a long way. He even threw rocks over Church Rock. That's about seven miles from Iyarovik. Sometimes Ilyarunik swam across the bay and hunted caribou. When he came home he pulled the dead caribou along through the water.

Finally Ilyarunik had four wives. In the fall he hunted caribou and the wives were busy putting food away for winter. Those four wives ate a lot. They had to have many caribou to keep from starving in the winter.

When Ilyarunik was starting to make a good living, the Tapqaq people came to kill him. He heard them coming from far away. He told his wives to get some rotten salmon eggs. Ilyarunik rubbed the rotten fish eggs all over his face and body. Then he put on his oldest parka and took a walking stick. He went to the beach, acting like he was old and weak. The salmon eggs started to steam, and the steam went up like a cloud over him. The Tapqaq men were in their boats offshore. Ilyarunik yelled at his enemies, "I am sick with a skin disease. It would be easy to kill me now." When they came in close to shore, Ilyarunik threw rocks. The rocks skipped over the water and hit the skin boats. The boats all sank. Some enemies tried to swim up to the beach. Ilyarunik hit them with rocks and killed them.

Ilyarunik's wives started to think maybe he had killed too many men. One day Ilyarunik came home very tired from hunting. He went to sleep. While he was sleeping, those four wives lifted him up and carried him to the fireplace. They tied rawhide lines to his arms and legs and then they tied the lines to each of the four roof posts. They pulled the ropes tight, so Ilyarunik couldn't move his body when he woke up. The oldest wife felt over Ilyarunik's chest until she found right where his heart was beating. The wives stuck Ilyarunik in his heart with a spear. When the spear went in his heart Ilyarunik woke

up. He pulled one arm and one leg loose. He looked all around the room. Ilyarunik didn't see anybody there but his wives, so he just lay back and died.

There may be some more to the story. This is all I remember. Maybe somebody in Deering knows the story better.

A POOR ORPHAN BOY

A man and wife were happy together, never arguing or jealous of each other. The man was a good hunter and the woman always did her share of work. Like other men, the husband spent much of the time when he was not hunting at the qaligi. When her husband was hungry, the wife brought him food. The man shared his meals with a poor orphan boy, who had no relatives to furnish him with a kayak and hunting gear and other things a young man needed to make a living.

One time when the wife gave the husband his food he whispered to her, "Why don't we pretend we are jealous, just for fun?" The wife answered, "I will do as you want." So when the man had eaten all he wanted, he spilled the orphan boy's food on the floor, and said nothing. The boy went hungry that night and day after day the same thing happened: the woman brought plenty of food; the husband ate all he wanted, then threw away the remainder.

The wife one day didn't take food to her husband. She put on her best kamik and a parka with a fine wolf ruff. Then she walked to a place in front of the qaligi where the men emptied their urine buckets, and there she stopped. No one saw her standing there. Men came out and threw urine against her feet, but she didn't move or speak at all. The frozen urine piled up around her body. Still she didn't move. Only the orphan boy saw her.

The husband was beginning to worry now. Days went by and still his wife didn't come to the qaligi. Finally he went home to look for her. The house was empty and cold. Frost crystals covered the floor and inside walls. He knew she had been gone a long time. The man was crazy with worry now and he asked an angatkok to find his wife. The angatkok tried, but he didn't have enough power to find her. The husband hired every angatkok he could get. At last the qaligi was full of angatkoks, and not one of them could tell the man where his wife was.

The room was all quiet when the poor orphan boy came in front of the people and said to the husband, "I know where your wife is, but no one has asked me. How much are all these great angatkoks worth? They can't find your wife. You gave them almost everything you owned and none of them could find her. I can find her if you give me new clothes, an ice pick, and an ice scoop." The husband said he would.

That poor boy was really an angatkok. He put on his new clothes. He sang a song inside the qaligi and then he went outside to the place where the woman was frozen in ice. The ice was almost above her mouth. The boy sang as he chipped the ice away from her body. She was still alive. He let her go and she went back to her husband.

THREE ANGATKOKS GO UNDER THE SEA

The beluga didn't come to Buckland one spring. So three angatkoks, one man and two women, used their power to bring the beluga. They went over on the east side of the bay [Eschscholtz Bay], and a lot of people were there to watch them. Those three angatkoks were standing on the beach. They were dressed in nice skin clothes. Then the angatkoks walked out together across the mud flats. It was low tide. The people on the shore saw those three angatkoks wade out in the water and they kept on walking right out into deep water. The people waited for the angatkoks to come back. They waited for two tides, about twelve hours. Then the angatkoks came back. When they came out of the water, their clothes were all dry.

Those angatkoks had walked far out under Kotzebue Sound. They chased a lot of beluga back to the Buckland flats. The water was calm after the angatkoks came home, and a lot of beluga swam in close to shore. The Buckland men killed lots of beluga. There was plenty of food for the whole year. This shows how powerful some angatkoks were in the old days.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

A woman was in labor, but couldn't give birth to her child. Finally the woman died. The child was still inside her. The village people were afraid of the dead woman's spirit. So all the families loaded their things on sleds and ran away from the place. When they stopped to camp that night, a rich man remembered that he had left his best iron knife in his old house. The rich man tried to get somebody to go back after the knife. Nobody wanted to go back to that place where the dead woman was. They were afraid. They wouldn't go, even for pay.

The rich man's son made up his mind to go and get the knife. He started out late, and when he came to the empty village it was already getting dark. He didn't want to travel in the dark. He said to himself that he would sleep that night in his old home. He lay down to sleep. Then he heard a voice. The voice of his dead brother came from the roof. It said, "You should leave now. Somebody is coming." The man thought, "There isn't anything to be afraid of. I'll just go back to sleep." But before long he heard somebody coming. That person was singing, and a baby was crying. He knew it was the ghost of the dead woman, but he couldn't get out of the house. The ghost came in the house. He saw her come in the room. She was carrying that baby in a meat dish. She came up to him and pushed the meat dish into his hands. Then the man was unconscious.

The voice of his dead brother woke the man the next morning, and it told him to leave the house. This time the man obeyed his brother's spirit. He took the iron knife and went back to the camp.

There isn't any more to tell.

THEY HEARD A GHOST

Some women were sitting inside a house. They heard a ghost outside. One of the women moved fast. She sat down on the floor in front of the door. The ghost was coming in the door. The woman took

her big ulu and acted like she was cutting the air. She said to the ghost, "Split in two." Then she cut the floor. That ghost saw the hole and it went down into the ground without hurting anybody. That woman saved herself and the other women, because she remembered what to do when a ghost came.

A BOY IS TORTURED

There was an old woman who lived alone with her grandson. The boy was not yet a man, but was able to hunt some. One day the boy met a cross fox. He killed the fox, skinned it, and brought the skin home with him. A rich man saw the boy carrying his nice fox skin. The rich man wanted that fur. But the boy wouldn't sell the fox, and the rich man got angry. He tied the boy to a stake and stripped off his clothes. Then he built a fire in front of the boy. As the fire burned the boy's belly, the rich man tore away the skin and muscle with a sharp stick until the boy's intestines fell out of his body.

When there was a skin toss the people sang a song about how the boy had been killed. Nobody took revenge against the rich man.

AIYAUHROAQ

An old man named Aiyauhroaq lived with his son's widow. The son was killed by some men, who also tried to kill Aiyauhroaq.

One time the daughter-in-law went outside to cook. She stayed for a long time. When she came back her face looked different. The old man could read her mind, and so he knew she had been talking to somebody.

Early one morning the woman went out of the house and didn't come back. A lot of enemies came around the house. The old man was inside, all alone. One of those enemies hollered down through the smokehole, "How do you want to be killed, Aiyauhroaq? Do you want to be shot full of arrows; or do you want to be burned alive?" The old man said, "Well, I would like to stay close to the burning fire. I choose to be burned." Then those men set the roof on fire. The house started to burn. Aiyauhroaq hollered at his enemies, "Thank you for making such a good fire." Then he got out of the burning house by using the tunnel he had dug. He came up in the brush and he could see all the enemies standing around the burning house. Then Aiyauhroaq took his bow and arrows. He shot those enemies, one after another. They didn't know where the arrows were coming from. Aiyauhroaq killed all those men except two. He saved two men, so they could tell people how they lost the fight.

This happened in the spring. Aiyauhroaq threw the dead bodies into the river. Early the next fall, when the young ice had formed, the old man was walking on the river ice. He saw a man's body in the water below. The dead man was lying on his back. Aiyauhroaq then made up a song about the dead man. He sang, "Ah, Savegon, I see you there in the water, looking up at me."

Aiyauhroaq was a Tapqaaq man. Maybe he lived at Buckland or Selawik.

HOW INNYUKTUT GOT ITS NAME

Innyuktut got its name after some Silawingmiut came and killed all the people but one woman and her baby. Then the Selawik men burned all the houses, with the dead people inside. The Silawingmiut robbed the caches and burned them too.

A young man who was becoming an angatkok told the people that the Silawingmiut were going to come. He said he would know this ahead of time, so he could save himself.

Those Selawik men came up to the village early in the morning, in the early fall. Each one of them had a feather stuck in his hair. The enemies crawled on top of the houses. The Buckland people were all asleep. The Selawik men started shooting arrows into the houses, down through the smokeholes. Other men waited outside the door and killed anybody who tried to come out. They killed everybody, men, women, and children. The dead people's blood ran down the hill and made a small lake there on the flat. If you look in that lake today you'll see that the water is red.

Before the fight, the Silawingmiut left a girl on top of a hill near had caught her, she squatted down in a low place. The Silawingmiut becoming a woman. The girl saw one man run away from Innyuktut. He started to run across the river, on top of the water. The young angatkok was trying to save himself. The Selawik girl yelled; and the Buckland man sank in the water as far as his knees. She yelled again; the angatkok fell face down and sank under the water. Then she could see him swimming as fast as he could. Selawik men were chasing him in the kayaks. Soon the Selawik men paddled up close to the swimmer. They stabbed him to death with their spears.

One Buckland woman got away. She ran upriver along the east shore. She was carrying her baby in her amaut. The woman had some kind of power to make herself hidden. When the Selawik men almost had caught her, she squatted down in a low place. The Silawingmiut came running. They knew she was around there somewhere, but they couldn't see her. They tried to kill her by stabbing all over the ground with their spears. They came plenty close but they missed her. Finally they went away. When it was dark again, the woman ran south along the river. When morning came she hid again and didn't move until it was dark. After a long time she found a Buckland camp. That's all.

INDIANS AND ESKIMOS

A long time ago the Silawingmiut chased some Koyukuk Indians away from the Koyukuk country. The Indians came to Buckland to live. The Buckland Eskimos were their friends. The Indians built a village at Igloo Point, at the mouth of the river on the west side.

The Indians lived at Igloo Point for quite a few years. The real Buckland people lived about a mile and a half upriver at Innyuktut. There never was any trouble between the Indians and the Eskimos. But one day the Silawingmiut came and fought the Indians. The Silawingmiut chased the Indians away and they never came back, except for trading.

HOW SOME ISLANDS WERE MADE

Iyarovik [Chamisso Island] was once an umiak. Egg Island was a black whale. The two smaller islands were harpoon floats. Those underwater rocks between the islands were harpoon lines and float lines. All those things—even the hunters in the umiak—were changed into stone, long ago.

CONCLUSIONS

Eskimo stories are told primarily to amuse an audience, and the author hopes these English translations of Buckland myths have retained some measure of their original function. Additionally, the stories are of interest because they offer an intimate view into the nature and values of a unique and rapidly vanishing culture. Often a story leads the informant to related material which is of value to the researcher. For example, after telling the story, "A Giant Worm Lived Near Elim," the informant remembered that he had once seen the fresh trail of a giant worm, Tirichuk, along the Buckland River. Across each neck of land separating the meanders of the river was a path about two feet wide where the willows and undergrowth had been burned off uniformly close to the ground. There were no human or animal tracks nearby in the soft soil. Andrew conjectures that the vegetation was burned as the giant worm stretched its body overland in order to save the effort of swimming upstream.

No one living at Elephant Point has ever seen Tirichuk, but it is believed that the huge worm resembles a certain blue-and-orange colored insect caterpillar which is common to the area.

Stories of giant worms have been recorded at Kotzebue, on the northeast shore of Kotzebue Sound (unpublished field work by the author) and at Shishmaref (Keithahn, 1945, pp. 27-8), about one hundred fifty miles west of Elephant Point. Nelson gives a "Man-worm" story from Kotzebue Sound (Nelson, 1899, p. 516) but does not specify its place of origin. The Chuckchee, neighbors of the Siberian Eskimo, believe there is a giant worm that lives in the sea (Bogoras, 1904-1909, p. 327). Stories of giant worms also occur among the Nunivak Eskimo of southwestern Alaska (Lantis, 1946, pp. 287, 296).

Another widely distributed theme is represented in the Buckland collection by, "A Woman Becomes a Brown Bear." This story, familiarly known as "Feigned Death," is recorded from such widely separated groups as the Pacific and Bering Sea Eskimo, and from the Selawik Eskimo in the Kotzebue Sound drainage as well as from the Athapaskan Indians of western Alaska (Lantis, 1938, pp. 162-66; 1935, p. 116). Far to the east, in arctic Canada, a similar story is told by the Copper Eskimo (Jenness, 1924, p. 87A); it is known from the Chuckchee (Bogoras, 1913a, pp. 329, 602), from the Chugach Eskimo (Birket-Smith, 1953, pp. 154-155) and the Eyak Indians of the Copper River delta (Birket-Smith and De Laguna, 1938, p. 321).

We may have in "Eagle and Yakshuk" an example of a story drift from Alaska to Siberia. Bogoras gives a story which is reported to have come originally from "... Nuyak, on the American side" (Bogoras, 1913b, pp. 426-29). The Siberian Eskimo tale closely related to the

Buckland version may be summarized as follows: A woman with her child runs away from her husband because of mistreatment. She comes to a widower's house and he immediately wants to marry her. Before going out in the morning to hunt he warns her not to look in a corner of the house, but she disobeys and finds there the widower's dead wife, who had been torn to death by her husband's big penis. The woman runs away, is pursued by the widower, but he is accidentally killed. She remarries. The new husband, by magic, makes her small son grow into a man. She finds that in truth she has married an eagle; his bird skin hangs outside the house. Her son puts on a bird skin, becomes an eagle, and kills the former husband who had abused his mother.

Stories of giant eagles that carry away a woman and marry her are known from the Copper and Iglulik Eskimo of Canada, (Rasmussen, 1931, pp. 221-2; 1929, p. 284) and the east Greenlanders (Rasmussen, 1939, pp. 124-27) tell similar tales. In these stories the wife escapes and her relatives kill the eagle. Giant gulls similarly carry off women for wives in stories of the Cumberland Sound and Polar Eskimo (Boas, 1907, p. 195; Holtved, 1951, pp. 67-9).

Another linkage between Buckland Eskimo and Chuckchee legends is provided by Bogoras' statement concerning a Chuckchee belief, "Another 'giant bird' is a 'middle [sea] bird.' He lives only on the open sea. Some features of this bird, perhaps, connect him with the albatross" (Bogoras, 1913a, p. 328). The great bird Yakshuk, the Kungyikmiut say, is neither gull nor eagle but yet has a beak "like a gull's." This description may conceivably fit the albatross. In any case, reports of giant birds continue to circulate in western Alaska, and it would not be surprising to find the stories are based on an element of fact.

A familiar character in Eskimo mythology appears in "How Raven Got and Lost a Wife." Exactly the same story of Raven is known at Unalakleet, according to Francis Eben, a Unalakleet resident, age 30 years (verbal communication). Francis was told the story by his father.

The next story, the epic of Ilyarunik, is known all around Kotzebue Sound. It is, perhaps, not unreasonable to assume that Ilyarunik was an actual person whose exploits have assumed superhuman proportions with the passage of time. Probably Ilyarunik's adventures have been fitted to a much older basic story outline. In modern times, some individuals have become widely renowned for great feats of strength and endurance. For instance, one man with several living children is said to have carried weights alone that four ordinary men could not lift (verbal communication with Deering residents, 1950). Thus the Eskimo Strong Man exists in the eyes of his contemporaries, as well as in old legends.

The stories concerned with shamanism and the supernatural are somewhat difficult to interpret since our knowledge of Alaskan Eskimo religion is incomplete. The Buckland notes relating to religion are markedly deficient because of the scarcity of informants and the natural conflict that exists between aboriginal religion and Christianity.

One of the ghost stories, "Spirits Of The Dead," appears to be paralleled outside the area. In a Chuckchee story, a village is abandoned after a newborn baby becomes a cannibal and devours its mother. An

old man forgets a valuable knife and a young man goes back to the deserted village to get it. He is pursued by the cannibal infant but escapes. The hero gets the old man's daughter as a reward (Rasmussen, 1931, p. 433). Other versions of this story are told by the Polar Eskimo (Holtved, 1951, pp. 77-78). The Chuckchee and Greenlandic tales involve a cannibal child, but the Kungyikmiut informant gave no such detail.

Several of the Buckland stories of war and torture resemble closely Eskimo myths from other regions. The story of "Aiyaukroaq" shares these features with a Nunivak myth (Lantis, 1946, pp. 301-02): An old man is forewarned of his enemies' coming and gets ready by digging secret holes and tunnels from the house; the enemy warriors come and try to burn the house; the old man fights the attackers single-handed and the survivors run away.

A parallel between a Buckland and Netsilik (Canadian arctic) Eskimo myth (Rasmussen, 1931, p. 433) is apparent in "How Innyuktut Got Its Name." In both stories a woman makes herself invisible and escapes her pursuers, who stab the ground without avail.

The Buckland war stories fail to mention any conflict between the Kungyikmiut and the Koyukuk Indians and, indeed, one story, "Indians and Eskimos," portrays them as friends. The present-day Buckland Eskimo have no traditions of war against the Indians.

The last Buckland story, "How Some Islands Were Made," explains the formation of Chamisso Island and the smaller islands nearby. Stories of human beings and animals that are turned to stone are quite common throughout the Eskimo area.

The Buckland myths, as a whole, may be characterized as basically Eskimo in style and content. The several parallels cited between Buckland Eskimo and Chuckchee mythology probably would assume relatively less significance if more Alaskan Eskimo myths were available for comparison with the Kungyikmiut stories.

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