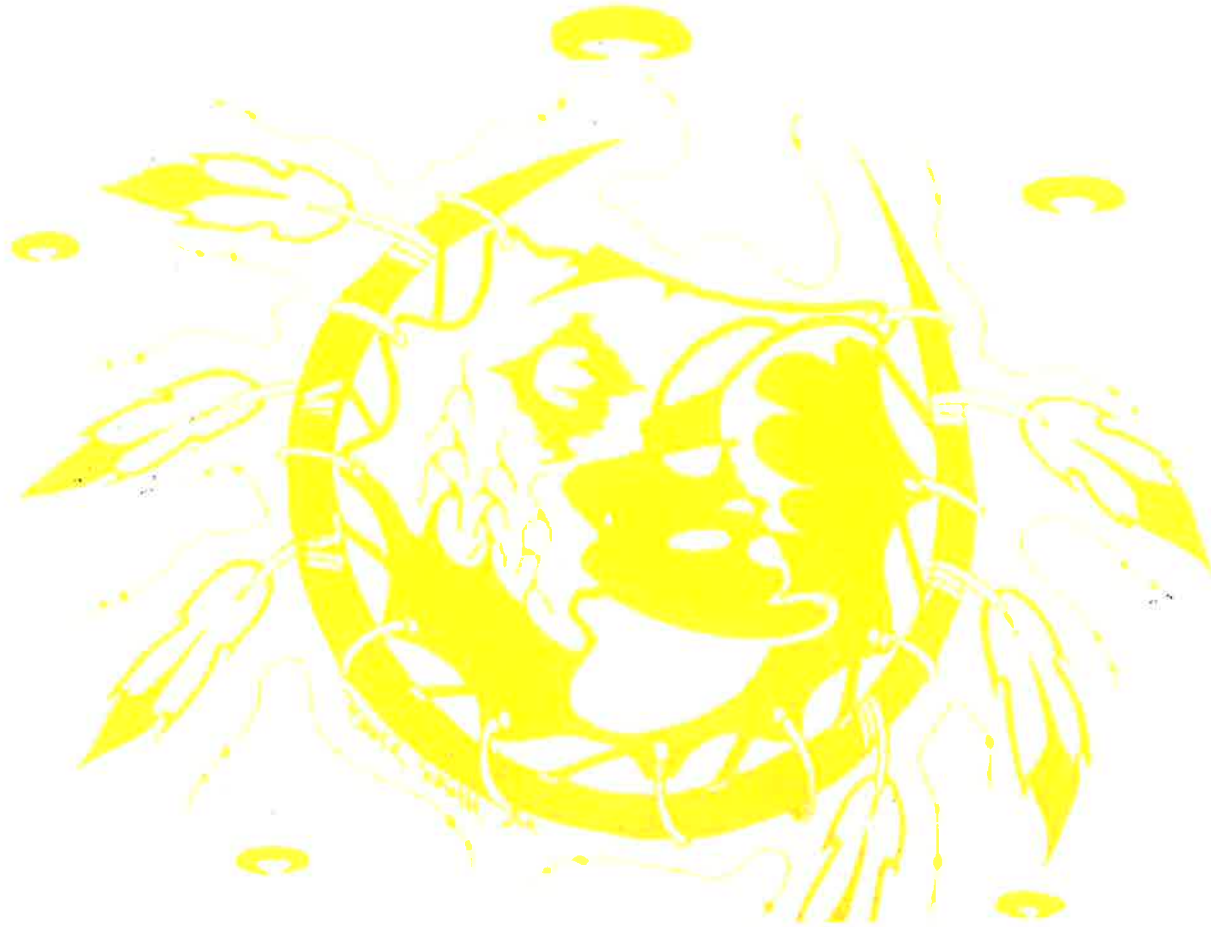


One Time When Wee-sa-ki-jahk Was Walking



One Time When Wee-sa-ki-jahk Was Walking

translated and transcribed by Anastasia Weesk

illustrated by Bruce Wynne



told by Albert Mattinas

[Now] I will talk about our brother, Wee-sa-ki-jahk. He was probably the first person on this earth. Wee-sa-ki-jahk was a very important person. He walked all over the earth. Wee-sa-ki-jahk could speak many languages. He understood everyone who spoke to him. Our brother could even understand the animals. Nobody ever mentioned if Wee-sa-ki-jahk had children, but it was told that he did have a wife.

told by Raphael Wabano

In the beginning the muskrat had a large tail. In the very beginning that is when the animals first lived on this earth. The muskrat's tail was as big as the beaver's.

When the muskrat went swimming, he had a hard time because his tail was too heavy for him. He cried because it was too heavy.





[One time when Wee-sa-ki-jahk was walking around he heard a crying sound.]

"What is the matter with whoever is crying in the water all the time," he said. Wee-sa-ki-jahk jumped into the water near a grassy area. There he saw a muskrat who couldn't swim because his tail was too heavy.

"Why are you crying, little brother?" he asked the muskrat.

"It's my tail, big brother. I can't swim with such a huge tail," he replied.

"Come here," he told him. The muskrat swam ashore trying to swim with his big tail. Wee-sa-ki-jahk grabbed him. He held onto the muskrat. Wee-sa-ki-jahk pulled on his tail and it became narrow.

Wee-sa-ki-jahk threw the muskrat back into the water. The muskrat swam away. Then he disappeared. Now the muskrat was able to swim fast. That is why the muskrat swims fast today because his tail is narrow and no longer heavy.



told by Joseph Iahtail

Wee-sa-ki-jahk called all the animals *n'cheech* (a term of affection for a younger brother or sister) because he was the oldest of them all. One time when Wee-sa-ki-jahk was walking around he came upon

some geese sitting on a narrow lake thinking about flying north. "We ought to be going up north to feed the people," the geese cackled. "They must be starving." One of the geese took off from the water. Wee-sa-ki-jahk did not have feathers, so he begged these geese for some. "*N'cheech*, give me your feathers," he pleaded. "Pluck out your primary feathers and your tail feathers," he continued.

The geese gave in to Wee-sa-ki-jahk's request. A feather was taken from each goose and attached to his arms, but Wee-sa-ki-jahk still couldn't lift off from the ground. "Come on," he said. "You didn't give me enough feathers." Then the geese gave Wee-sa-ki-jahk more feathers. "Now, do exactly what I am doing," he was instructed. "You should be able to lift off from the land," the geese told him. Each goose had given him four primary feathers. One goose flew up into the sky and said, "Do exactly what I am doing. Take off against the wind." The goose took off and circled back to where Wee-sa-ki-jahk was sitting. "Now, your turn," he was told. Wee-sa-ki-jahk managed to take off from the ground. "Now, come and land here. Do what I did. Then we will fly away later on," said the goose. Wee-sa-ki-jahk came in for a landing in the manner that you have seen geese descend. As he approached for his descent, Wee-sa-ki-jahk landed the way geese do.

"Now we can fly away," the geese told him. They all began to fly. "Someone will call to us when we fly across the lake," the geese explained to Wee-sa-ki-jahk. "But only one of us will leave the flock, only one, when they start calling from their blinds." "So don't look. Don't dare look," the geese ordered. "Even if you take a peek, you will fall from the sky," they continued.





When Wee-sa-ki-jahk thought he was approaching the hunters' blinds, he spread his wings as he looked. Wee-sa-ki-jahk fell from the sky. He was gone. Some women who were hunting and calling geese, ran to where Wee-sa-ki-jahk dropped thinking it was a goose that fell. The women started screaming. This scared the hunters who shouted, "What's the matter?" "Wee-sa-ki-jahk is trying to kill us," the women screamed back.

The geese flew north and left Wee-sa-ki-jahk behind, but he eventually walked north.

told by John Hookimaw

Wee-sa-ki-jahk never used a canoe. He just walked along the shore. Wee-sa-ki-jahk lived here and there. One time when Wee-sa-ki-jahk was walking along a river he came upon a beaver lying on the bank. Wee-sa-ki-jahk checked it out. He turned the beaver over repeatedly as he examined it. "I wonder what he died of," he muttered. Wee-sa-ki-jahk took the beaver with him anyway. He carried it to a heavily wooded area. That is where he wanted to eat it.


Wee-sa-ki-jahk sat down. He roasted the beaver over a fire. When the beaver was finally cooked, Wee-sa-ki-jahk began to eat it. While he was eating, the trees started to make noises, the kind of squeaking noises that trees make as they move in the wind.

"Ever noisy when I am trying to eat," he said. "I am going to find the trees making those noises!" he exclaimed.

Wee-sa-ki-jahk found the trees making those noises, but he got caught in between them. He couldn't get loose. Wee-sa-ki-jahk was stuck there for a long time. "Let me go," he pleaded to the trees.

As the *wee-shka-cha-nee-shuk* (whiskey jacks) ate around the fire, they made much noise. After a while, Wee-sa-ki-jahk fell down with a thump. That was when the trees finally let him go. He went back to the fire where he had cooked the beaver. All he could find were bones. The *wee-shka-cha-nee-shuk* had already eaten the whole beaver. Wee-sa-ki-jahk continued to walk along the shore.

As he walked, Wee-sa-ki-jahk saw a canoe lying on the ground, it was an old canoe. "I think I can use this if I fix it," he said. Then he began to repair the canoe. When he finished fixing it, Wee-sa-ki-jahk got into the canoe and started paddling on the river. Unexpectedly, Wee-sa-ki-jahk thought he heard people talking. He sat there and listened as he floated down the river. Two women came around the bend. Wee-sa-ki-jahk paddled after them. These women turned around and disappeared very quickly. Wee-sa-ki-jahk followed them, but they left him behind. He jumped out of the canoe and ran inland. Wee-sa-ki-jahk took a short cut trying to overtake them on foot, but he did not see them. They were gone. The women had left him behind.





told by Simeon Metat

[One time when Wee-sa-ki-jahk was walking around he met some wolves.] He went moose hunting with the wolves. The wolves killed a moose.


"I'm hungry, little brother," he said to the wolf. The wolves were his younger brothers.

"I'll feed you, big brother," the wolf responded.

The two of them went for a walk. They killed a moose. Wee-sa-ki-jahk was able to eat because he went hunting with the wolves, his younger brothers. Many wolves were with him until spring time.

Once while they were walking around, Wee-sa-ki-jahk was told to go and find a place to make camp. "Go, big brother," the wolves said. Wee-sa-ki-jahk went ahead, looking for the nicest place to make camp.

One of the wolves said, "Hey, big brother, this is not the place. This is not a good place to camp. Come over this way." They made camp on a rock overlooking a nearby lake. There they lay down. Wee-sa-ki-jahk lay down too, that is where he lay down to sleep. It wasn't long before Wee-sa-ki-jahk began whining that it was too cold.







"Our big brother is cold," the wolves said. "Cover him up." Two wolves got up and spread their tails over him. They covered Wee-sa-ki-jahk so he wouldn't get cold. Wee-sa-ki-jahk survived by being wrapped up with the wolves' tails.

Later on they moved again. Sometime in March or April, Wee-sa-ki-jahk and the wolves travelled their separate ways.

Wee-sa-ki-jahk walked and walked. He travelled north. There are signs of his travels everywhere he went. The rocks Wee-sa-ki-jahk made for a wind break can still be seen in the north today on this side of Winisk. The shelter Wee-sa-ki-jahk made as he went north can still be seen. Wee-sa-ki-jahk lived inland. He built his wind break out of rocks. These rocks can still be seen. Wee-sa-ki-jahk used four rocks in all. He put one of them on top. These rocks are so big that no one on earth can lift them. That is what he did.

It said that one of the corner stones is gone. They say one of the corner rocks rolled off his shelter.

Sometime later Wee-sa-ki-jahk left. One time when Wee-sa-ki-jahk was walking along he could not get across one of the big rivers. Wee-sa-ki-jahk wanted to jump over the river, but he could not do it. He took a big rock and threw it. The rock fell in the middle of the river. That is where he jumped. Wee-sa-ki-jahk used the rock as a stepping stone to get across the river. He continued walking along.



Finally, Wee-sa-ki-jahk rested. He remained in the north where it is very cold. Wee-sa-ki-jahk stayed there for a long time-sitting, resting. He sat there so long that snow covered his head. This snow was like frost. Wee-sa ki-jahk's eye brows got very big. So big that ptarmigans perched on them. Many ptarmigans landed on his eye brows covered with frost as he sat there.

That was where Wee-sa-ki-jahk spoke for the last time. He talked about the wife he left in a warm part of the country. People talked to him about leaving his wife.

"Why did you abandon your wife?" they asked.

"Yes," he said. ["I left her because she had too many children."] ... "That is why I left her. I don't know if I will see her again, but I will return towards the end of the world when the leaves are yellowish green."

That's the end, as far as I remember.

There are other stories that are longer.



